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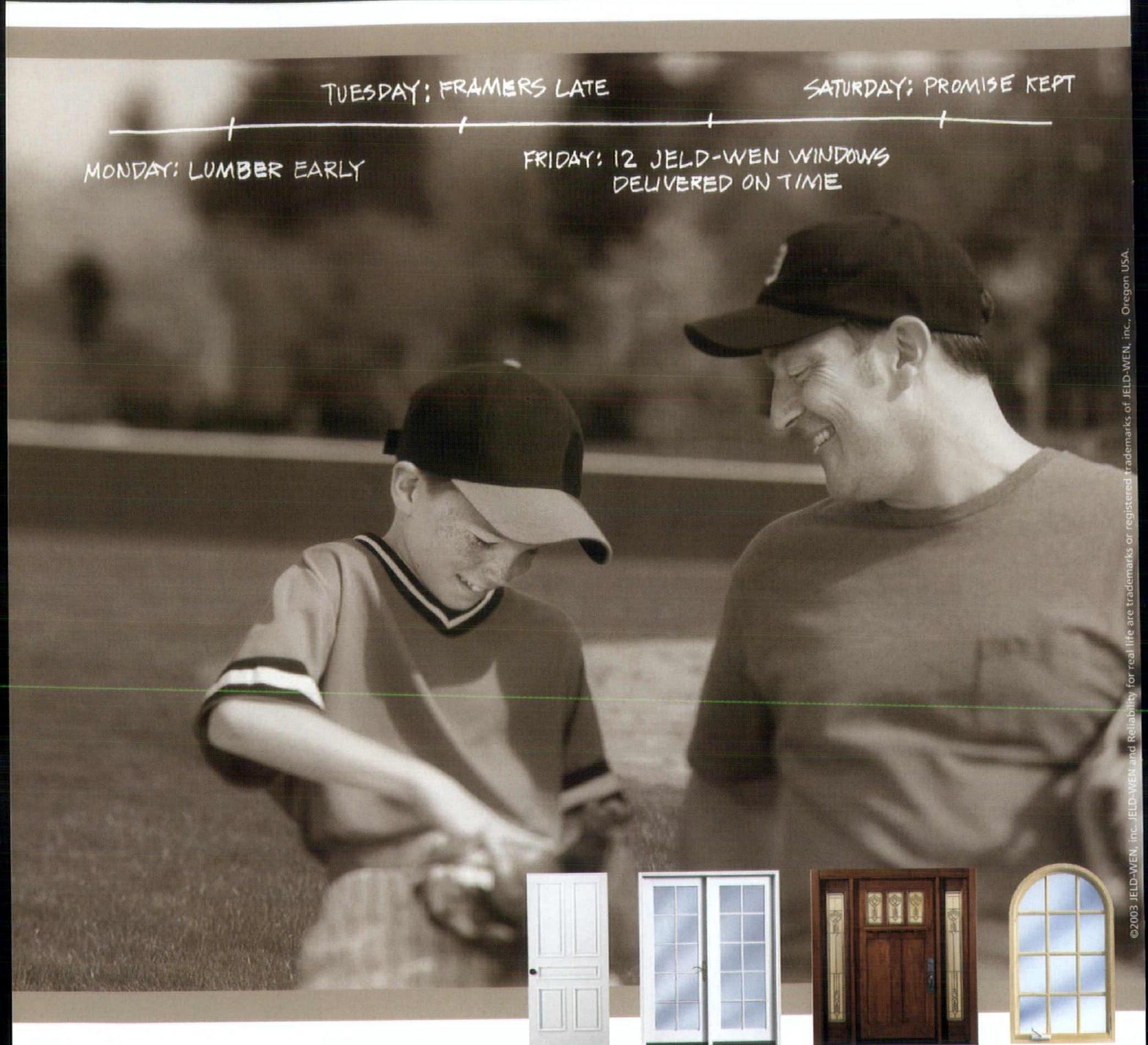
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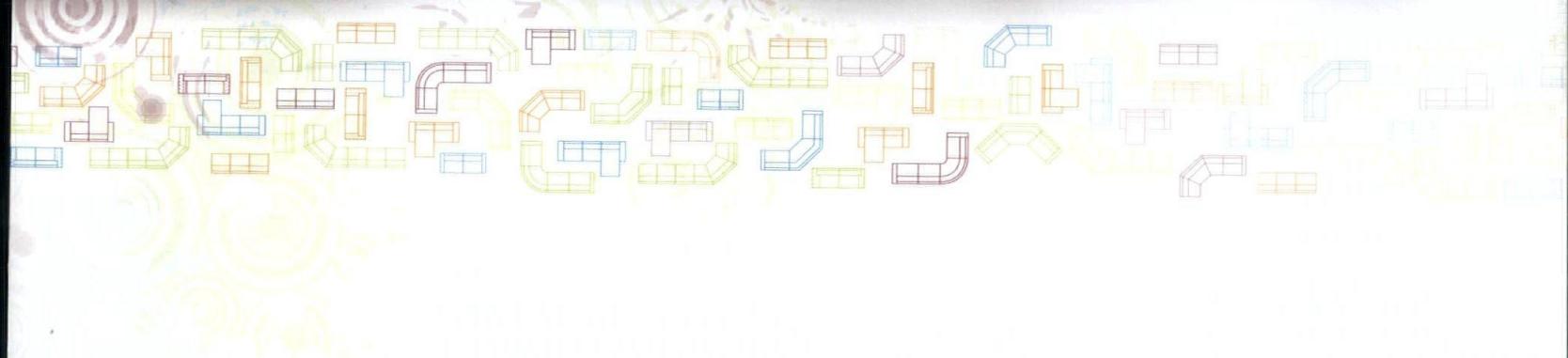
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Black and White Residence, David Jameson Architect.

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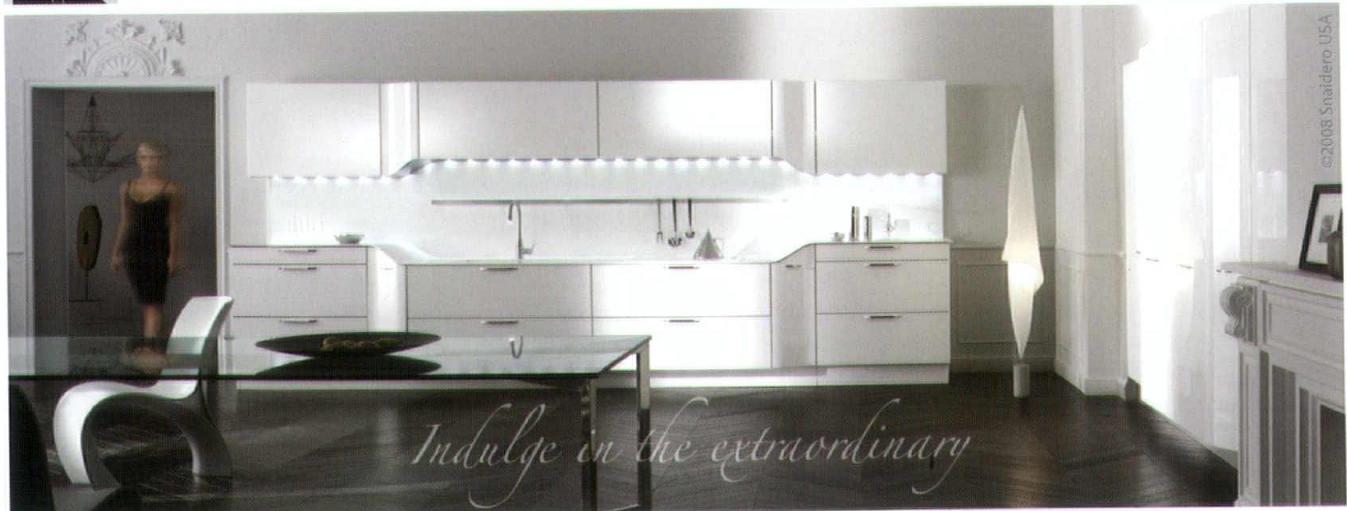
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Photo by Paul Warchol Photography
Cover Design by Ronald O'Rourke

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DECISIONS, DECISIONS



David Hamilton

As I write this, a jury composed of three well-regarded architects is ensconced in the conference room of our Chapter House, pouring over the 142 entries in this year's version of AIA | DC's highly competitive annual residential design competition. As is the case each year, to avoid potential bias in the judging process, the jurors are drawn from outside the DC area, and the entries don't display the names of the architectural firms responsible for them. As you turn the pages of this issue of **ARCHITECTUREDC**, you'll see what this year's jury – **James Evans, AIA**, of Houston; **Julie Hacker, AIA**, of Evanston, IL; and **Dan Shipley, FAIA**, of Dallas – selected as the most worthy projects for 2008.

Although the jurors are looking for projects that demonstrate excellence in architectural design, each jury has its own specific interests and preferences, so it's impossible to know in advance which projects might catch the jurors' eyes. In this sense, handing the entries over to the jury is a bit like sending out each issue of this magazine: We can't be sure what might catch our readers' eyes. For example, I received a letter from one our readers who noted unapprovingly that our product-showcase section, **DetailsDC**, often covers products sold in stores that are not designed by architects. It's a fair point, considering the focus of this magazine. It would be great to showcase products that all come from architect-designed stores. But **DetailsDC** is meant to feature well-designed products for your home—particularly energy-saving products that architects are specifying for their latest projects—even if those products happen to be sold in stores that are not designed by architects. So for this particular section of the magazine, we give precedence to the design of the product over the design of the store. But who knows? In the spirit of the letter, perhaps the owners of stores featured in **DetailsDC** will gain a heightened appreciation for the value (commercial and otherwise) of good architectural design, and hire an architect the next time they remodel, expand, or relocate their store.

JURY BIOS

James M. Evans, AIA, is the founder and principal architect of **Collaborative Designworks** in Houston, Texas. Before launching his own firm, Jim was an associate at Kirksey Architecture in Houston and worked at the Renzo Piano Building Workshop in Paris. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture in 1995 and a Bachelor of Architecture in 1997 from Rice University. Since its founding, Collaborative Designworks has won numerous awards for its distinctive modern houses from AIA Houston, the Texas Society of Architects, and the AIA Housing Committee. One of these award winners will be featured soon in an upcoming episode of the "World's Greenest Homes," to be aired on HGTV Canada and the Discovery Home Channel.

Julie Hacker, AIA is a partner of **Stuart Cohen and Julie Hacker Architects** in Evanston, Illinois. The firm won the 2007 Leadership Award from *Residential Architect* magazine and is the recipient of numerous other awards in preservation and design from the Chicago Chapter of AIA, the American Wood Council, and *Interiors Magazine*. Ms. Hacker holds a Masters in Architecture from the University of Chicago and has been a partner in the firm since 1991. Last year, along with running a very busy practice, she competed in the Ironman Triathlon.

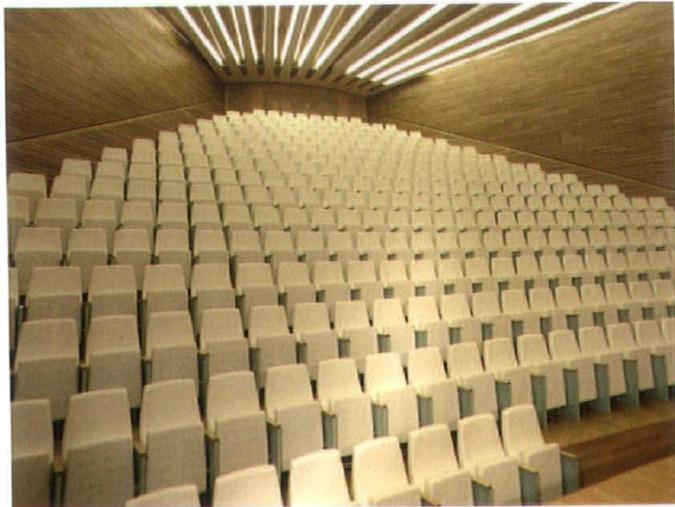
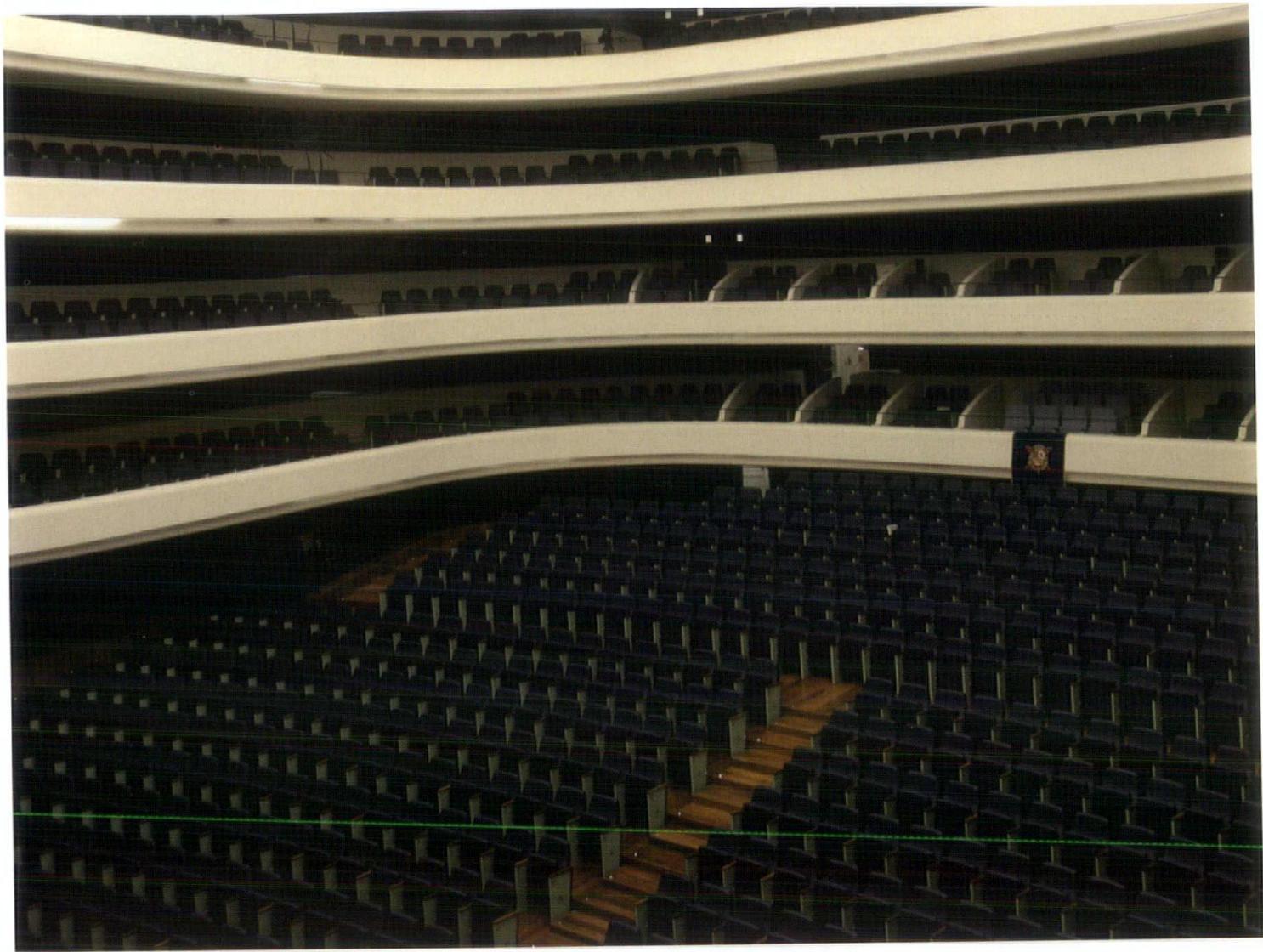
Dan Shipley, FAIA, is principal of **Shipley Architects** in Dallas, a five-person firm engaged in residential, institutional, and public-works architecture as well as design-build. Mr. Shipley is a fourth-generation Texan whose love for the state's landscape, towns, and cities runs deep. His architecture is grounded in the craft of building and the art of detailing. Mr. Shipley is a graduate of the University of Texas School of Architecture. His firm has won numerous awards for its residential work from the Dallas Chapter of AIA and *Residential Architect* magazine.

Welcome!

I took over the reins of **DetailsDC** for this issue because **Denise Liebowitz**, the section's usual author, had quite enough to do as the editor for this issue. In our **GreenDC** section, **Ronald O'Rourke** describes a beautiful, economical, and green condominium residence in an unlikely setting. **Steve Vanze, AIA, LEED AP**, principal of **Barnes Vanze Architects, Inc.** and member of the Old Georgetown Board, provides a think piece on "Mansionization" to accompany an article by Denise about scale. And Denise finishes up with an article about some of the other things that architects design, including furniture and carpets. I also want to note the contribution of **Bill Smith, Assoc. AIA**, and **Brian Forehand, Assoc. AIA**, proprietors of the Design-Cult blog (www.design-cult.com), who helped me with store selection for this issue of **DetailsDC**. We covered Design-Cult in our Winter issue, and I encourage all of you to keep an eye on this engaging endeavor.

Lastly, I want to alert you to our annual conference and trade show, called **DesignDC**, being held this year on July 8-10 at the Ronald Reagan Building. While most of the conference is for and about architects, we're having a **special session just for the public** on Greener Living: Suggestions for a Healthier, More Energy Efficient Home, at 12:30 pm on July 9. You can sign up for it on our Web site at www.aiadc.com. As always, we love to hear from you. And if you come to DesignDC, we can talk in person. I look forward to seeing you there.

*Mary Fitch, AICP, Hon. AIA
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Garden District • RCKNDY

• Target Corporation

by Mary Fitch, AICP, Hon. AIA

Garden District, the plant nursery on 14th and T Streets, NW, has expanded by adding a new indoor site up the block at 14th and Church. The new interior—designed by San Francisco landscape architect Ernest Wertheim, the dean of garden center design, with local architectural firm **Zahn Design** as architect of record—is open and brimming with ideas. Owner Joe Cormack has created a store that's green in both senses. **Ecosource** earth-friendly containers, for example, are made from rice husks and petroleum-free natural pigments, and are formulated to retain their shape for five years and then decompose quickly in landfills or compost. They come in lots of sizes and colors, and range in price from \$4.95 to \$13.95. You can also visit the new Garden District store if you're looking for fair-trade garden furniture by **Atuto**. And if you suddenly find yourself needing a croquet mallet, Cormack has more garden games than you can, well, shake a stick at. Visit the new addition to Garden District in person or online at www.gardendistrict-dc.com.



RCKNDY (pronounced rock candy) brings high design to U Street with **Blu Dot's** Really Good Chair, described as "skinny as a super model, yet far more sturdy." In four colors, including the basic black shown here, the chair comes flat in a box and folds together quickly along laser-cut lines. **RCKNDY's** design philosophy says that, like its eponymous sweet, the store carries products that come in multiple colors and multiple flavors with an edge. Owner David Dennis has been in retail since he was 16. After often traveling to Asia for a previous employer, he decided to put down roots and located his store on U Street because the area is home to many other independent retailers. Visit **RCKNDY** at 1515 U Street, NW, or at www.rckndy.com.



David Rikard

Target with its Design for All philosophy recently opened its first DC location to much fanfare. The store is an anchor for DC USA, an urban shopping center that smartly places its smaller stores on the outside, facing the street, where they can benefit from and contribute to the area's growing street life. Smack on top of the Metro and in the commercial hub designated by residents in their community-

based plan published in 1998, Target and its neighbors bring an end to the blight this neighborhood endured since the 1968 riots. The nearby Tivoli Theatre (designed by **SmithGroup**) has been renovated, and new apartment buildings—Kenyon Square and Highland Park (**Torti Gallas and Partners** with **Hickok Cole Architects** providing the public spaces)—are attracting a lot of new residents. We love Target's Design for All aesthetic: It doesn't have to be expensive, it just has to be good. As its Web site says, "Great Design. Every Day. For Everyone." We couldn't have said it better. Visit Target at 3100 14th Street, NW, or at www.target.com. 

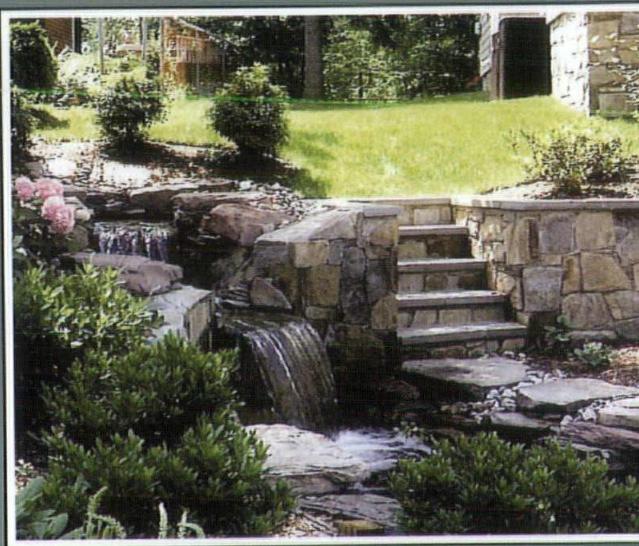
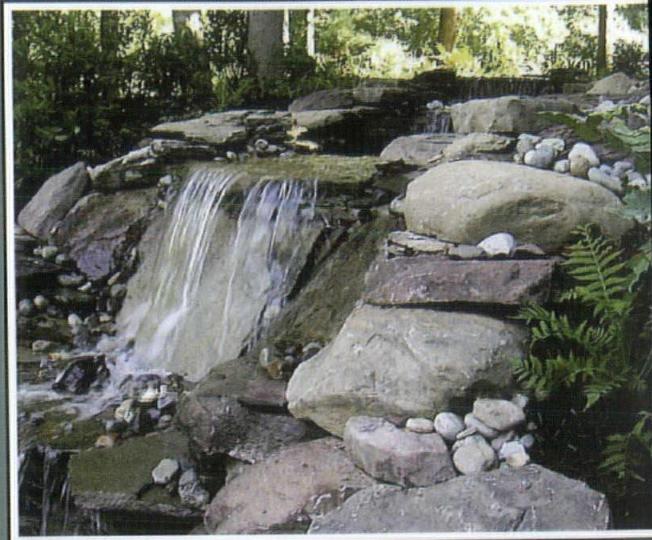
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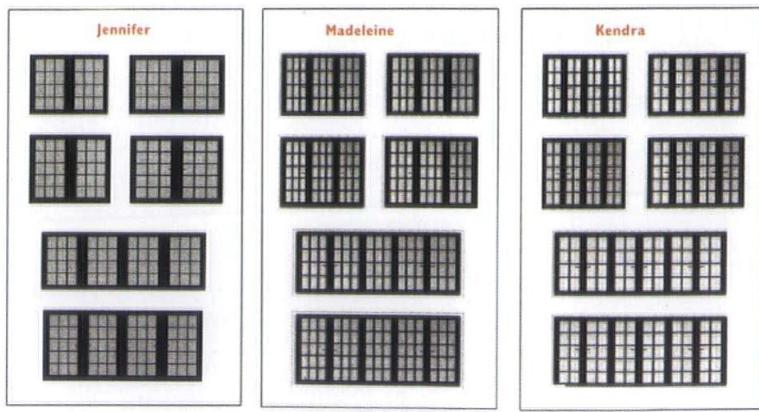
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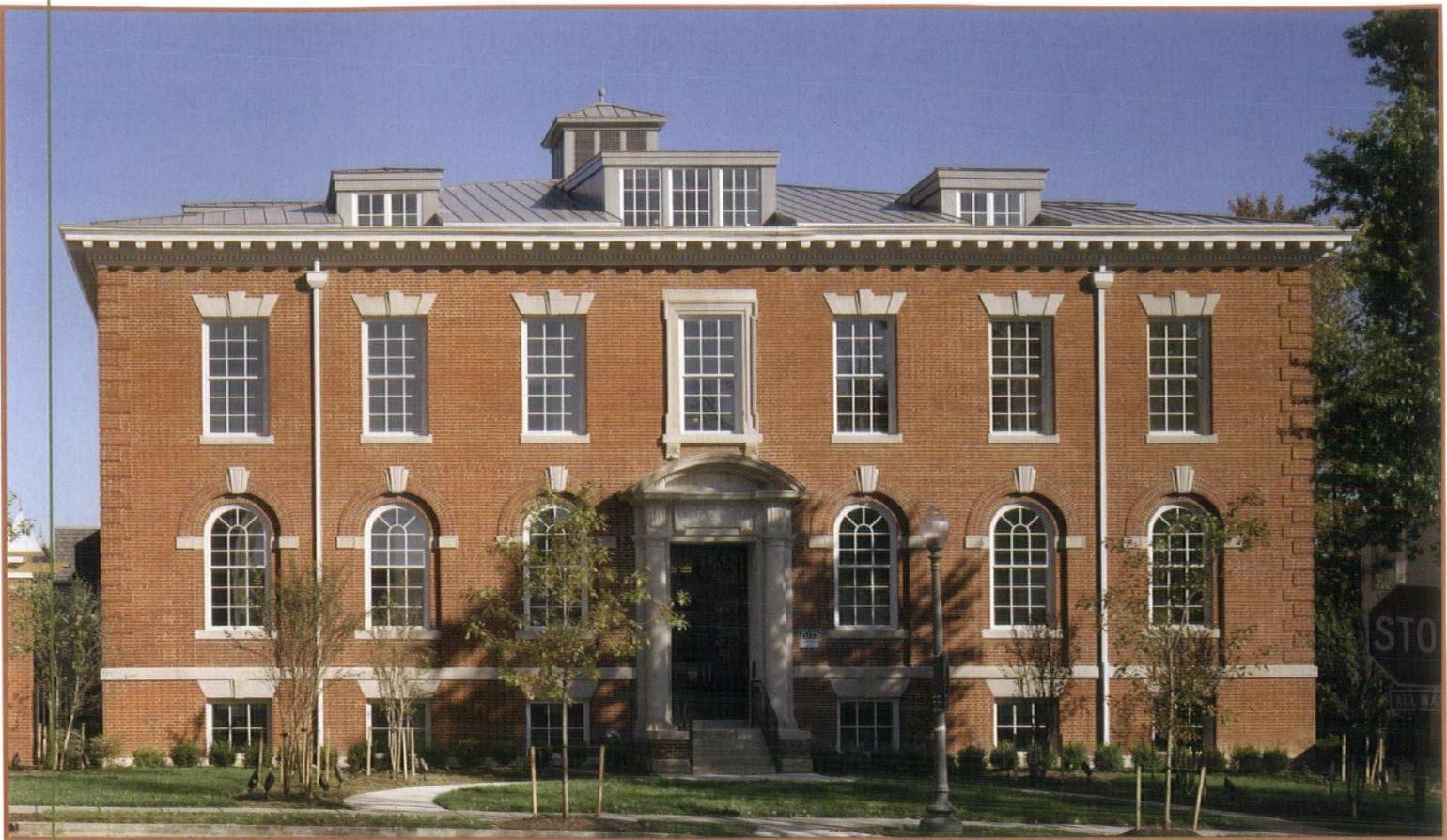
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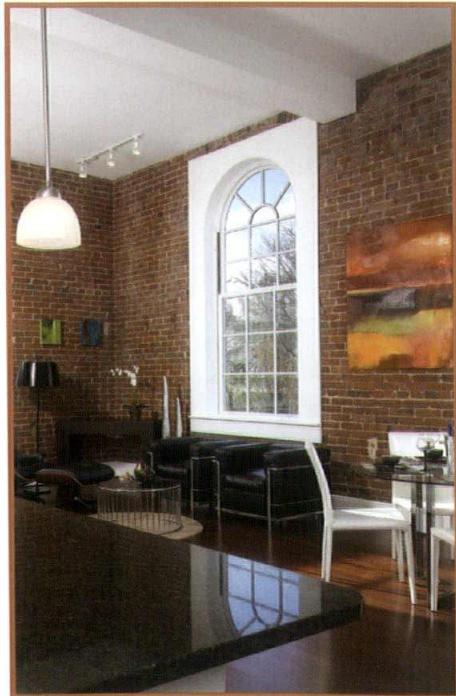


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2008 Washingtonian Residential Design Awards



The Washingtonian Residential Design Awards are sponsored by the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and The Washingtonian magazine. This year's competition, which drew a record 142 entries, was open to registered architects of homes in the Washington area or second homes of Washington-area residents. This year's jury of leading architects from around the country selected 12 of the most exceptional designs.

Bonstra | Haresign Architects LLP

Parker Flats at Gage School

Washington, DC

Architect: David T. Haresign, AIA

Contractor: James G. Davis Construction Corporation

Photography: Anice Hoachlander/HD Photo

This old DC public school building near LeDroit Park in Northwest Washington had sat empty for more than 30 years. Today, the historic landmark is the centerpiece of a 92-unit condominium project that has catalyzed neighborhood revitalization. In addition to the complete restoration of the Gage School, the development includes two new flanking buildings that are in keeping with the architecture of the area's early 20th century apartment buildings and row houses.

"The architect walks away from the project without leaving fingerprints all over it; the building looks like it's always been there," said one juror with approval. "Often these adaptive

re-use projects are all about the mechanicals—how to get all the new pipes and elevators in. Here, the clever insertion of these systems is done in a very unobtrusive way. All the mechanicals come up through a simple roof cupola; such a light touch.” Jurors also appreciated the use of attic space for additional living units and the building’s careful exterior detailing.

Neumann Lewis Buchanan Architects

Cliff House

Shepherdstown, West Virginia

Architect: Andrew Lewis, AIA

Contractor: Michael Roy

Photography: Walter Smalling and Andrew Lewis

Cliff House began life in 1835 as a one-and-a-half-story log cabin. It was soon remodeled and expanded in a rudimentary Greek Revival style; late in the 19th century the home was raised to two full stories and trimmed with Victorian casings. More recently, the structure had stood abandoned for nearly 50 years. The owner wanted to restore the building as a comfortable guest house while exposing its structural elements to convey the structure’s rich history.

“We loved the archeological dig aspect of this house,” said one juror. They all commended the use of a new external “skeleton” frame for the structure that allowed the interior log and planking surfaces to remain exposed while affording a cavity for new insulation

and utilities. A new bath was added on the second floor, and windows, mantels, and woodwork were restored based on field research and paint color analysis. “All the historic traces of the house’s past are evident; the architect has tread lightly on what was already there,” concluded the jury.





Gardner Mohr Architects LLC

Gilmer Residence

Chevy Chase, Maryland

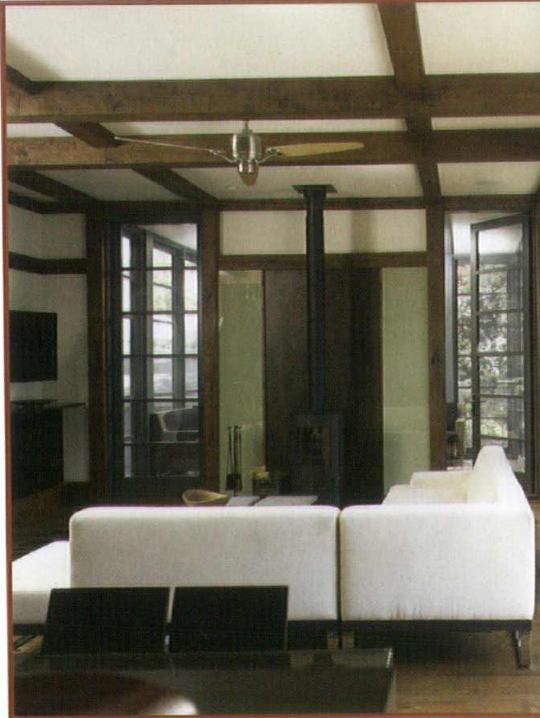
Architect: Amy E. Gardner, AIA, LEED AP

Contractor: RHK Construction

Photographer: Celia Pearson

The roof was leaking and the floors were sagging in this 1920s bungalow, but it had an intimate character the owner and architect wanted to preserve. Even though the renovation and addition more than doubled the size the original 1,800 square-foot house, the goal was to avoid "McMansionization." The roof and second-floor rooms were removed, the second floor was rebuilt, and a garden addition and an entirely new second floor were configured under a new roof. The sequence of rooms from front to rear is a gradual transition from cozy bungalow to expansive garden rooms. The spaces opening to the garden have ten-foot sliding doors, reminiscent of shoji screens.

Jurors especially appreciated that the house retains much of its previous bungalow character, but blended with an Asian-modern sensibility. Said one jury member, "This is a reinterpretation of the idea of a bungalow; the house was given a new personality, but it is still a bungalow personality." Although the interior of the house was gutted and transformed, jurors liked that "it looks as if it could have always been there."



Wiedemann Architects LLC

Chevy Chase Four-Square

Washington, DC

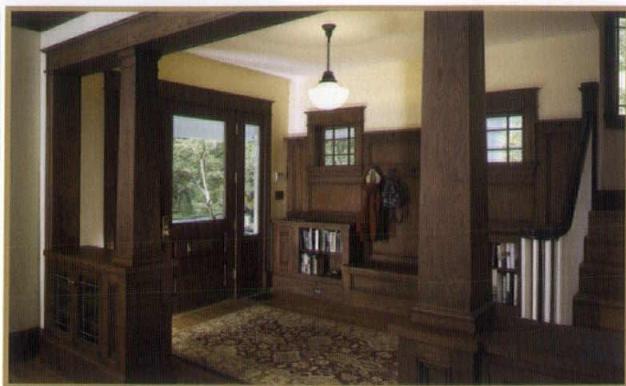
Architects: Gregory Wiedemann, AIA, Principal;
Felix Gonzalez, Project Architect

Contractor: McNamara Brothers, Inc.

Photographer: Anice Hoachlander/HD Photo

The challenge here was to substantially expand the living space, while preserving the character and integrity of the original historic home. In the finished project, a modest breakfast room addition and new roof dormers are the only visible exterior additions. However, two more levels of living space were achieved by creating an office and bathroom in a previously unfinished attic, and excavating the crawl space for a new lower-level bedroom, bath, mudroom, and recreation room.

On the interior, the extensive renovation maintains the characteristic order of a traditional Four-Square with an entry foyer opening to the existing stair. Period natural oak trim was custom milled, and new millwork inspired by the original elements of the house was added. New French doors and a characteristic asymmetrical front porch connect the home to a side yard and terrace. "The interior is completely reinvented," commented the jury. "The interior is not historic, but it's very believable."



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David Jameson Architect

Spout Run Residence

Arlington, VA

Architects: David Jameson, FAIA, Principal;
Christopher Cabacar

Contractor: Added Dimensions, Inc.

Photographer: Paul Warchol Photography

The owners wanted to transform their more traditional 1970s home, located on a hilly bluff near the Potomac River and the Spout Run ravine, to one that opened to the surrounding landscape. The architect retained the footprint of the original structure, removed its complicated layers of roofs, and spatially reordered the house.

Carved into a steep slope, a rampart-like masonry base roots the house to the site and supports a wood and glass tent above. A cantilevered roof hovers above an expansive series of clerestory windows; and to further extend the house to nature, multi-story spaces weave the surrounding forest canopy with the interior living areas. "Great restraint and a strong editing process; not fussy," said one juror. "A consistent hand can be seen throughout; simple and logical," said another.



Hall Place Residence

Washington, DC

Architect: KUBE Architecture PC

Contractor: Added Dimensions

Photographer: Hoachlander Davis Photography

This corner Georgetown row house was expanded with a new third floor and a rear addition and updated with a punch of contemporary drama. The entry façade maintains its historic context, but along the side of the house a new modern volume suspended from the third floor drops down vertically opening the building to light and views. The rear of the house was opened up with large glass windows and doors.

The interior is a composition of traditional and modern spaces, woven together with a new steel and frosted plastic screen wall. This vertical element, glowing with internal light, slides up along the existing staircase and extends through all three floors. One juror likened the steel screen insertion to "a precise surgical implant that changed the entire house. It is a connecting element and done very subtly." Jurors agreed the architect helped his client to make the most of his budget in this project.



Glass Bath

Arlington, Virginia

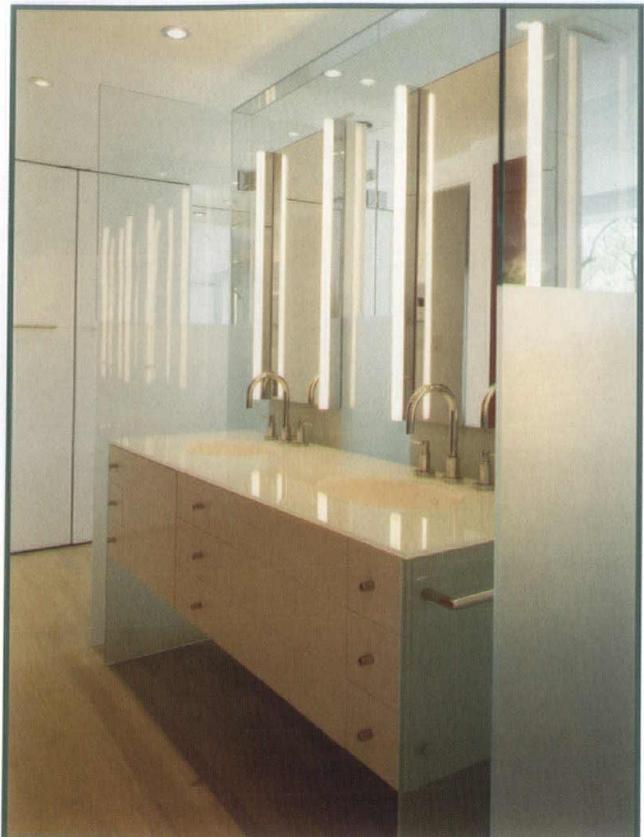
Architects: Mark McInturff, FAIA, Design Principal;
Taylor Borchert, Design Associate

Contractor: MT Puskar Construction

Photographer: Julia Heine/McInturff Architects

This is a free-standing glass bathing chamber that, in the words of one juror, "is treated as a piece of furniture." The European clients asked the architect to reverse the typical American master bedroom suite layout in their existing house by moving the bedroom into the former bath/dressing area and dedicating the existing larger bedroom to a combined space for bathing and dressing. The result is a glass-clad structure containing sinks, tub, and shower within a larger dressing and closet area. All of the surfaces—walls, tub surround, countertops—shimmer with light to create a bright, serene space for daily bathing rituals.

The jury was unanimous: "This is a great expression of a singular idea; beautifully executed."





Shinberg Levinas Architectural Design

Gillon Residential Addition

Bethesda, Maryland

Architecture: Alisha Clark, Antonio Vintro,
Salo Levinas, Assoc. AIA,
Milton Shinberg, AIA

Contractor: Residential Resource

Photographer: Shinberg Levinas

A bridge connects this new master suite to the family home. The sanctuary of the bedroom and sitting area is wrapped by a rich, protective wood shell on the street side and looks out to the woodland setting on the garden side. Carefully detailed louvers provide privacy. The layers of wood extend to the interior of the private space creating an interplay of light, shadow, and texture. For the jury, the addition was "an object in the landscape. The wrapper is elegant and organic and the whole mass becomes like a large tree trunk in the forest. The structure camouflages itself in the woods."

The drama continues on the interior with rich wood walls contrasting with glassy panes allowing in light and landscape from the private garden. Diffused light filters into the bathing and sitting areas where bookcases and tables are custom-designed by the architect for the space. "Beautifully simple," was the conclusion of the jury.

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Hoopers Island Residence

Church Creek, Maryland

Architects: David Jameson, FAIA, Principal;
Ron Southwick

Contractor: CJ & E Construction

Photographer: Paul Warchol Photography

"We can see the human hand at work here," one juror said of this residence located on a Chesapeake Bay barrier island and positioned between a salt meadow marsh, a pine forest, and the Bay. The house is composed of three main structures: the master cabin, the guest cabin, and the lodge. All the spaces can be used when visitors arrive in good weather or locked down during the off-season. A screened porch links the three metal-clad buildings and offers a breezy place to relax. In conformance with an ordinance established after the 2003 Hurricane Isabel destroyed many of the island houses, this one stands three feet above flood elevation on plinths of concrete masonry.

Jurors particularly liked the way the structures "hover" above the flood plain and their reference to the local architectural vernacular of the barns and fishing shacks on the island. "Great melding of interior and exterior spaces and beautiful use of materials, textures, and colors," in the view of one juror.





David Jameson Architect

Black and White Residence

Bethesda, Maryland

Architect: David Jameson, FAIA, Principal;
Christopher Cabacar

Contractor: MT Puskar Construction

Photographer: Paul Warchol Photography

"There are no false moves here," said one juror. "This is a large house, but the articulation and massing make it appear less daunting." Inhabiting the masonry shell of an existing house, this project called for renovating the main level and adding a second level with a significantly smaller footprint. Like four modern glass temples, the new spaces emerge from a white stucco plinth, appearing as volumes of light that glow in the landscape at night. To the architect, the form alludes to the Acropolis with a dramatic play of light and mass. On the street side, long, thin windows focus on the measured rhythm of surrounding tree trunks and edit views to the interior from passing cars. Opening out to the rear yard, a glassy wall slices through the plinth to frame unencumbered two-story views.



Studio 109 plc

Poplar Terraces

Falls Church, Virginia

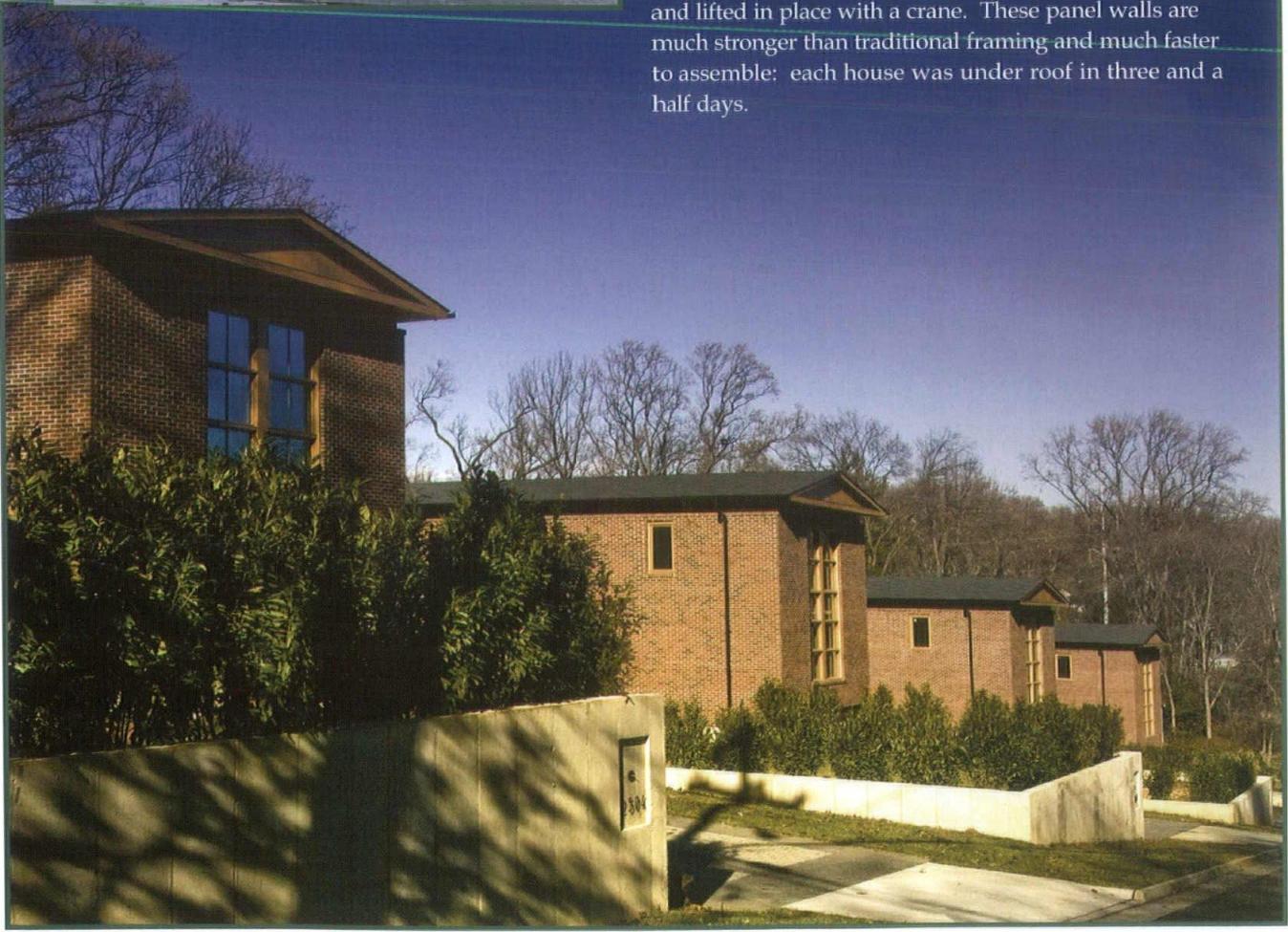
Architect: Jim Rounsevell

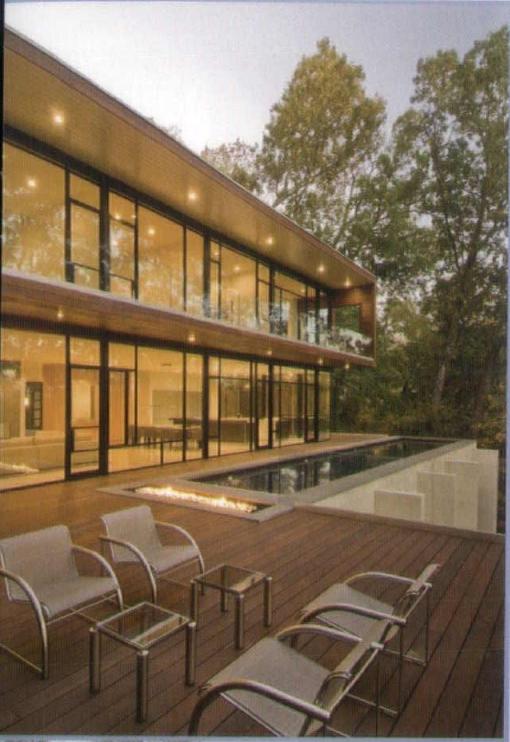
Contractor: MT Puskar Construction

Photographer: Jim Rounsevell

"This is the kind of architecture that often gets overlooked—the development house. This was done on a modest budget; it's succinct, simple, and doesn't try to do too much," according to the jury. The infill development shows deference to the environment. The grouping of four free-standing houses is defined by a series of private garden terrace walls, a preserved stretch of woodland, and compact, energy-efficient building plans. The architect uses the site to establish an intimate connection between occupants and the land and, through thoughtful configuration of the floor plans, has extended the living spaces into the landscape.

The jury appreciated that energy conservation, building assembly, and material selection were carefully considered in this project. The pre-cast concrete foundation system typically can be installed in a day. Structural Insulated Panels were custom fabricated for each house and lifted in place with a crane. These panel walls are much stronger than traditional framing and much faster to assemble: each house was under roof in three and a half days.





Robert M Gurney, FAIA, Architect

Wissioming Residence

Bethesda, Maryland

Architect: Robert M. Gurney, FAIA

Contractor: Bloom Builders

Photography: Maxwell MacKenzie

Perched on a wooded slope high above the Potomac River, this new house occupies the footprint of a pre-existing one in an effort to disturb the site as little as possible and to preserve mature trees. A new swimming pool is suspended twenty feet above the slope to further reduce the impact on the steep property.

"Wonderful material palette," said the jury. On the exterior, wood siding is combined with soft gray coated stainless steel and black steel window frames that fit comfortably into the landscape. Bluestone, gravel, and water complete the palette. On the interior, white terrazzo flooring, glowing translucent Kalwall panels, and white oak cabinetry define the minimally detailed space. Structural pre-cast concrete planks span large open areas and permit the house to be heated with a water-based system. Large overhangs on south-facing glass walls and the surrounding tree canopy shade the structure from summer sun. According to one juror, "This project works on all levels: from concept through planning, to final execution; it's done with care and not overworked." 



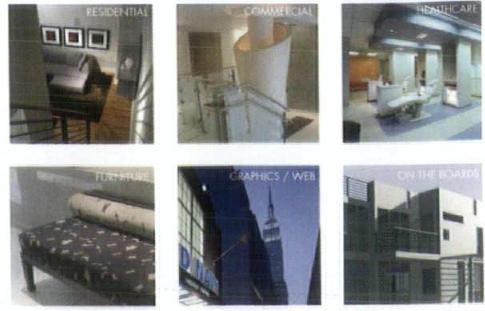
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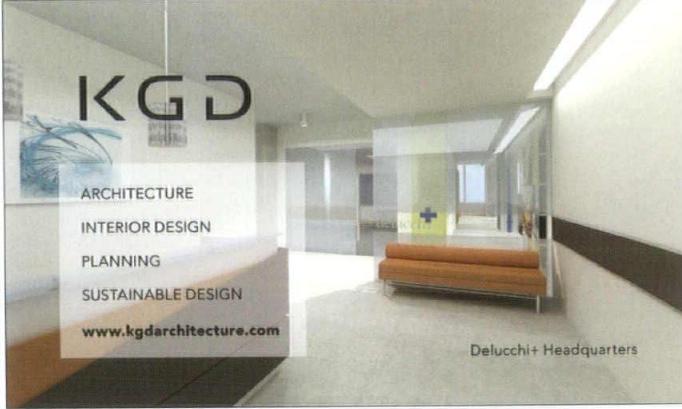


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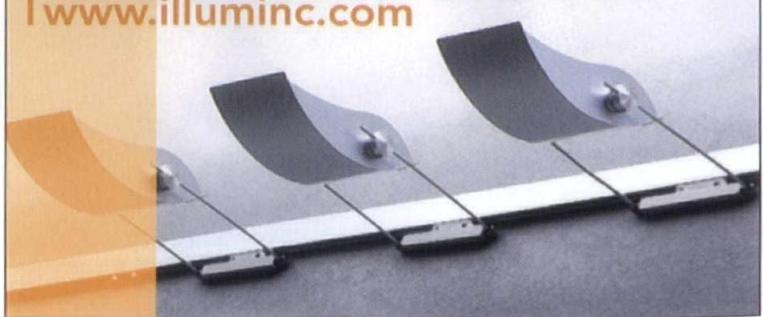
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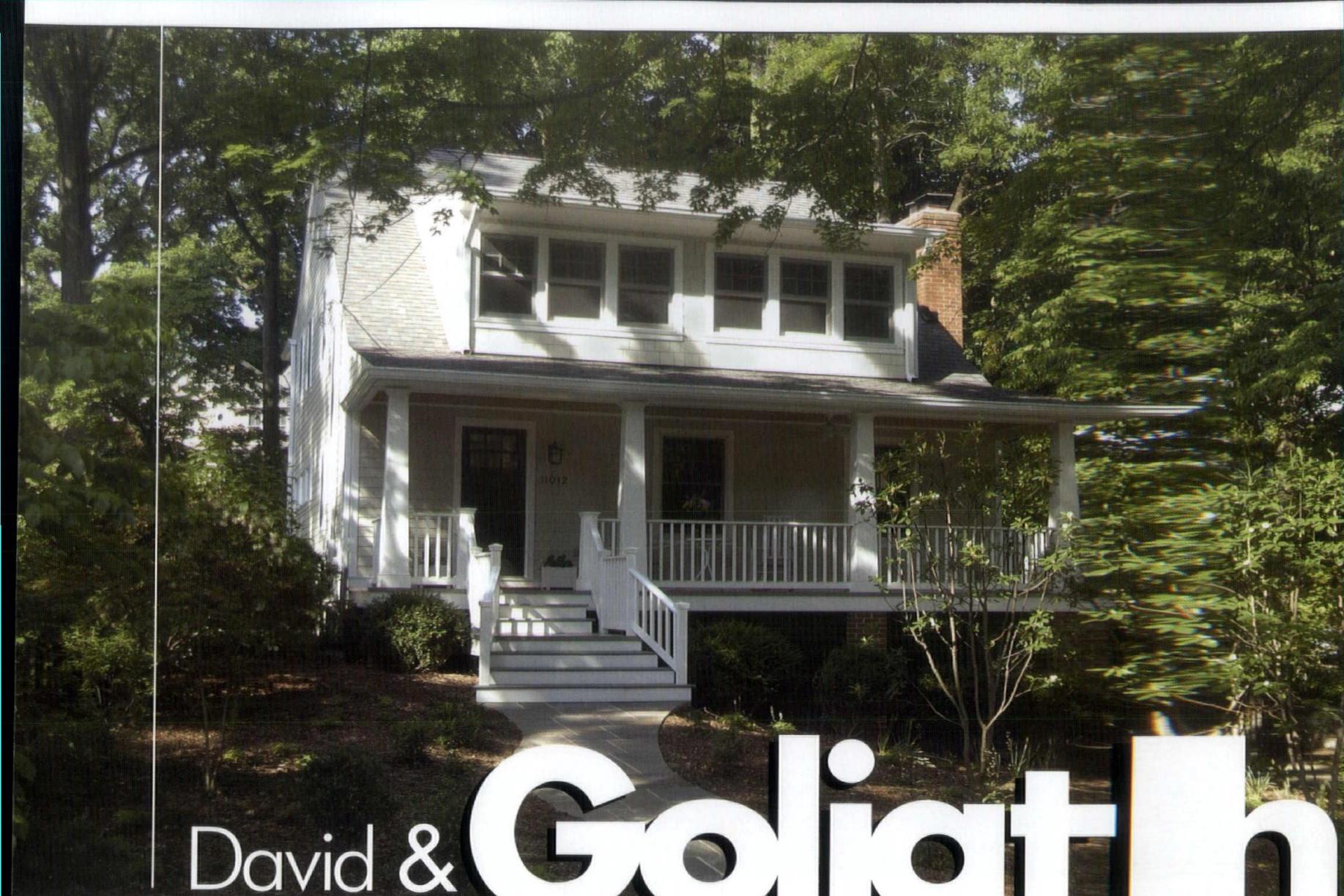
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David & Goliath

Goliath

Architects Show How to Rein in the Neighborhood Giants

by Denise Liebowitz

Do the neighbors look down on you? Are you living in perpetual shadow? You may be the victim of "mansionization," the growing trend in established neighborhoods where an older home is torn down to make room for a super-sized one. A related trend can be seen in roomy new additions to existing homes that dwarf the original structures and overpower the scale of the surrounding neighborhood. Washington's upscale, close-in suburbs are a prominent example of the teardowns, mansionization, and goliath-sized additions occurring nationwide. In these communities, land is often more valuable than the existing houses, affluent buyers want abundant square footage and the convenience of a close-in location, and at the same time, they consider an older home a "starter house" and ready for demolition or massive expansion.

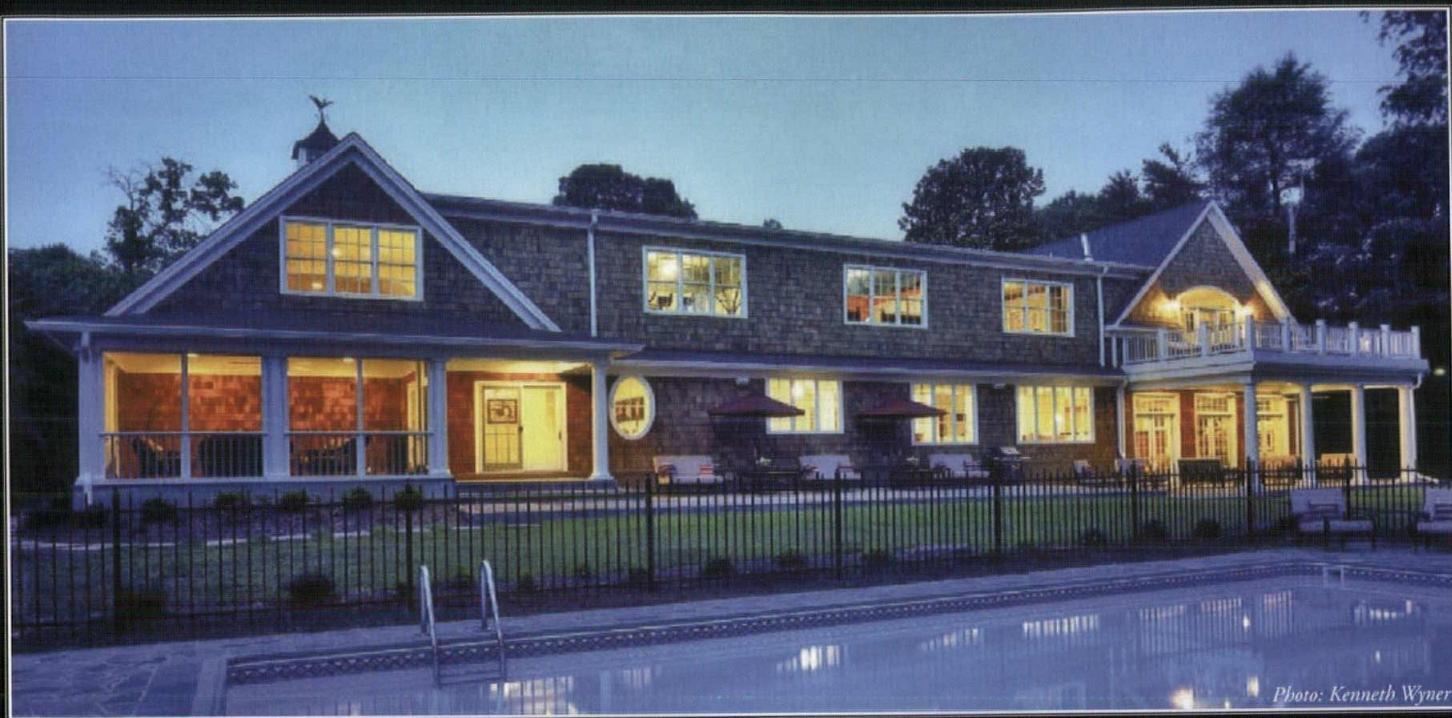
Developers insist they are not driving this trend; they are simply responding to market demand. Recent



Front and rear facades of Garrett Park Cape Cod before renovation.

GREENWALD CASSELL ASSOCIATES

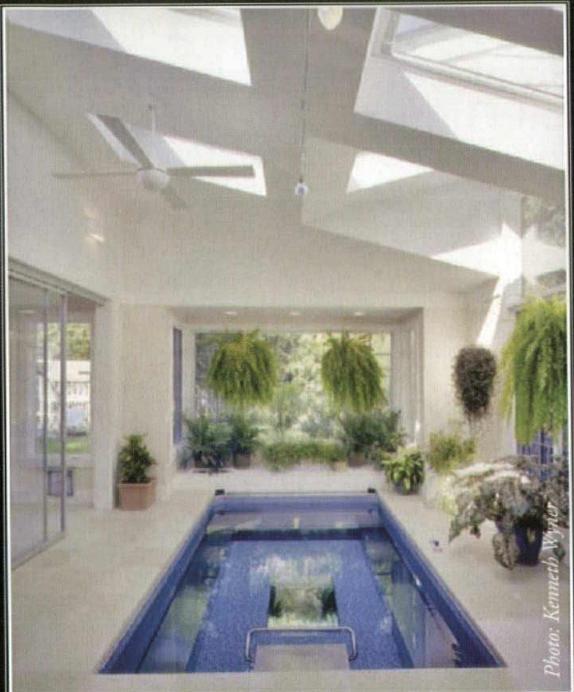
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A renovated Garrett Park house with a new front porch and rear balcony retains its modest character.



industry studies report that since 1970 the average size of a single-family U.S. home has grown from 1,500 square feet to 2,443 square feet, even though there are now only 2.5 occupants per property. And the National Association of Home Builders reports that 21 percent of houses built in 2004 equaled or exceeded 3,000 square feet. This is, after all, America, and we like big.

But there are plenty of problems associated with over-sized replacement homes and additions, and some of the neighbors are complaining. In addition to being incompatible with the scale and character of the immediate community, these large homes cover more of their lots, often resulting in the loss of mature trees and an increase in stormwater runoff. One man's dream home quickly becomes his neighbor's flooded basement.

Communities all around the Washington area have been grappling with over-scaled infill development with varying degrees of success. Some have used the historic district designation as a tool to protect against demolition; others have adopted zoning codes that restrict the amount of the building lot that can be covered. Many proposed

remedies have met with some resistance from residents who are concerned that their rights as homeowners are being unfairly restricted. The challenge lies in finding the proper balance between individual property rights and community property rights. Rather than defining this issue as a contest over property "rights," some neighborhood are recasting the debate as one of property "responsibility."

A good architect may be the best weapon in the battle against mansionization. In established neighborhoods throughout the region, architects are demonstrating they can give homeowners the modern, spacious homes they desire while maintaining the character and scale of the neighborhood that attracted them in the first place.

The "Not So Big House"

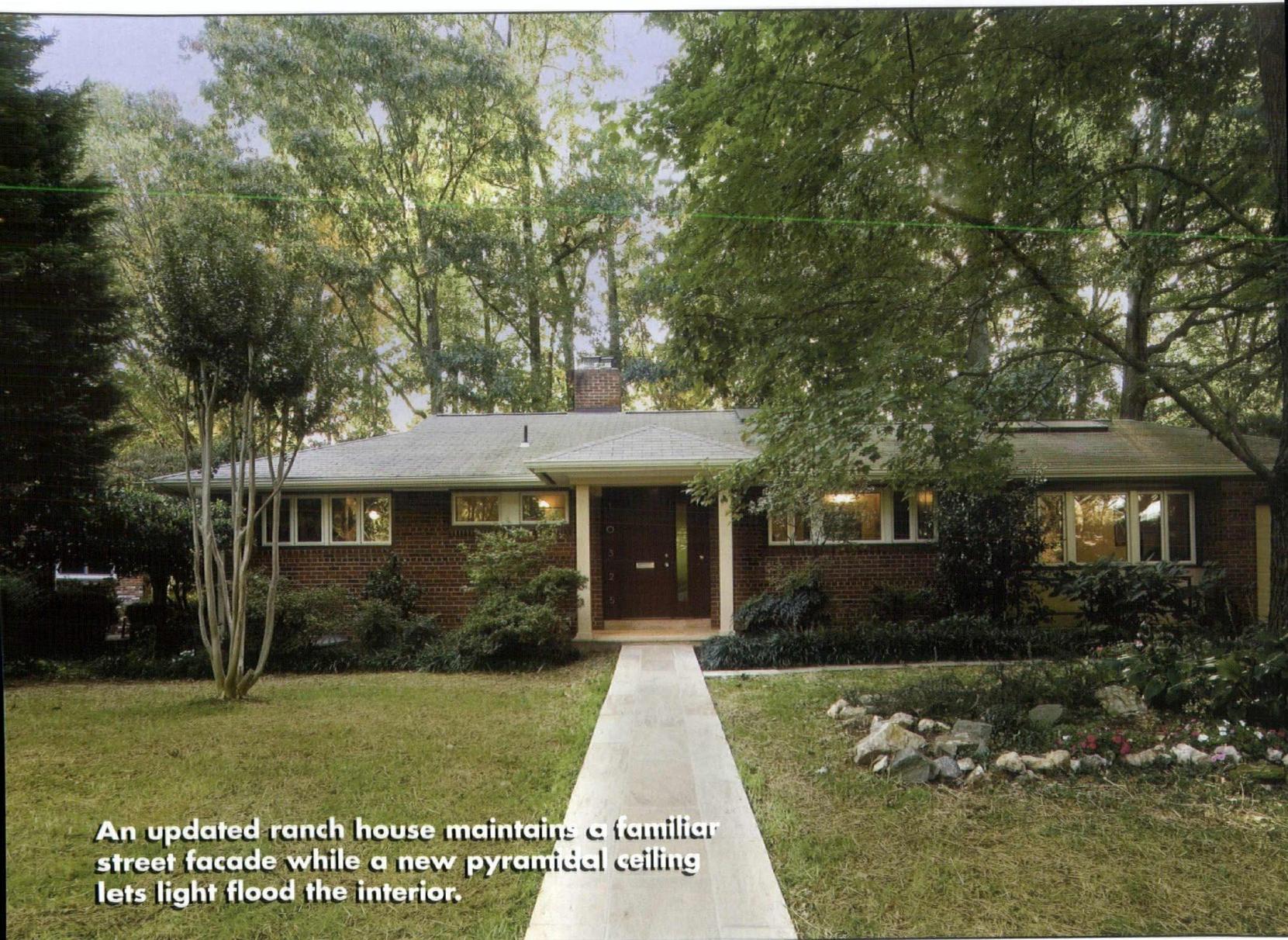
In Garrett Park, located in lower Montgomery County, Maryland, good design is offering an alternative to "big hair" infill. This small, family-oriented community dating back to the late 1880s, boasts a pleasing array of architectural styles—Victorians, Sears catalogue farm houses, ranches,

colonials, and bungalows. According to **Bob Reinhardt, AIA, of Reinhardt Architects**, Garrett Park "probably has the strictest regulations in Montgomery County regarding the size of additions and new construction. But in spite of this, the [zoning] overlay has not fully protected the neighborhood from oversize intrusions because of the way the regulations define attics. Many newer homes are built with trussed attics, a lower-cost construction technique. Although this kind of construction does not add usable living space, it makes the house look bulkier and more imposing."

Reinhardt, himself a Garrett Park resident, has worked with at least one neighbor family to expand their living space while maintaining the charm and scale of this special community. For their 1940s Cape Cod, "transformation, not mansionization" was what the owners wanted, said Reinhardt. When the clients first saw the one-story home on a house-hunting visit to Garrett Park, they knew they



Bethesda 1950s ranch house before renovation.



An updated ranch house maintains a familiar street facade while a new pyramidal ceiling lets light flood the interior.

would have to expand it and asked Reinhardt's advice before they bought it. Their program was modest: a bedroom for each of their two sons, a master suite with a balcony, and a stair hall on the second floor. On the first floor, the family wanted a front porch, foyer, living room, dining space for eight, and an island kitchen with a small home office area.

As luck would have it, Reinhardt's clients were adherents of the "Not So Big House" movement launched by architect Sarah Susanka who advocates for smaller, better-designed living spaces. "We wanted to design a home that would meet several needs and wants: a scale that would fit our lot and fit in among our neighbors' homes; interior space that is used efficiently, that feels open and comfortable, and that maximizes natural light; and within our available budget, to trade away space for more interesting design, materials, and finishes," said the homeowner.

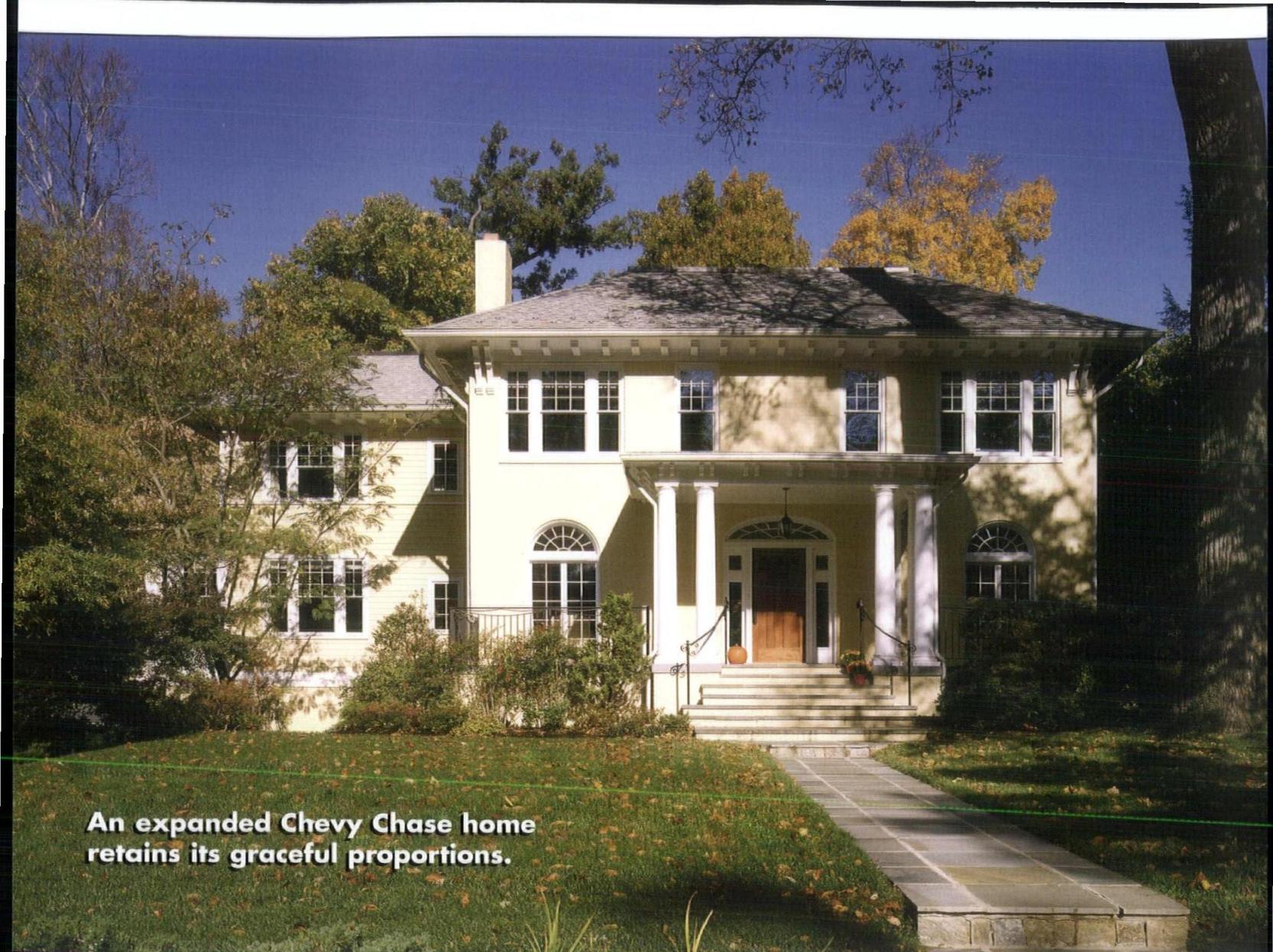
"Adding a front dormer and extending the existing roof slope up toward the rear gave the needed headroom for a full second story while maintaining the story-and-a-half relationship with its side neighbors," explained Reinhardt. A six-foot deep two-story addition across the rear provided the necessary extra space. The finished house is 2,085 square feet: 1,290 square feet of original structure and a 795-square-foot addition. "The completed project respects the scale and context of its neighbors and gives the impression of having been on the street as long as its companions," said Reinhardt.

Other Reinhardt clients living in Bethesda wanted to maintain the stylistic integrity of their 1950s ranch house. These homeowners are also proponents of the Not So Big House philosophy. "Removing the ceiling above the foyer and the living and dining rooms integrates what was attic area into a great space lit by skylights at the apex of the new pyramidal ceiling," according to the

Greg Hadley Photography



Greg Hadley Photography



An expanded Chevy Chase home retains its graceful proportions.

architect. Floor-to-ceiling windows across the living/dining area give the wide view of the rear garden that the homeowners requested. The other changes were more modest: the basic floor plan was retained, the foyer enlarged, a front porch added, and the deck enclosed with a roof and screened walls. The finished house is 2,756 square feet: 780 square feet were renovated and 40 square feet were added. "The house is the opposite of a McMansion, which gives it all away at the front," said Reinhardt. "Here, the surprise is on the inside. It's what Frank Lloyd Wright did."

Rescuing a Potential Teardown

Chevy Chase, Maryland is another front in the mansionization war. **Stephen Vanze, AIA LEED AP, of Barnes Vanze Architects, Inc.**, who lives there, says the community has had a moratorium on building, mostly to prevent mansionization. However, many homeowners oppose the restrictions. "It's hard to make this simple," he said of the regulations that limit the scale of infill.

When one house in his neighborhood recently went on sale, Vanze remembered that everyone who considered purchasing it planned to tear it down. The ultimate buyer, who called in Vanze, agreed to renovate and expand. "Our clients were very sympathetic to the idea of saving the house. They left it to us to figure out how to do it," says the architect.

Vanze, with project architect Stephen Schottler, completely remodeled the interior of this graceful Four-Square, removing the side addition and replacing it with a two-story addition for a family room on the first floor and larger master suite above. He also added an addition across the back to expand the kitchen and dining room. A new porch wraps around the rear and side of the house and accommodates a breakfast room. "To gain more space without overwhelming the original scale of the house, part of the addition appears as though a wraparound porch had been partially filled in. This allowed the purity of the original Four-Square to be left as a readable whole," explained Vanze, who lives three houses away. "It fits beautifully into the neighborhood."



Street facade and interior of new home
by Muse Architects.

Maxwell MacKenzie Architectural Photographer

House on a Hill Lowers its Profile

When **Stephen Muse, FAIA**, of **Muse Architects**, was asked to design a new house on a residential street near Rock Creek Park in Washington, he was challenged to deal with the property's steep slope. Because the house sits at the top of the slope, Muse wanted to minimize its height to be in scale with neighboring houses. He accomplished this by rendering the second floor as dormered spaces within a lower roofline. An elaborate stair gracefully connects the house to the street, and terraces and gardens carve usable outdoor space in the steep topography. The garage and entry foyer is located at the alley and connected to the main body of the house by a terraced gallery.

For Muse, the problem of inappropriate infill is not just a question of size. "The problem with McMansions is not only size, but the reduction of street-friendly architecture.these new houses are in contrast to older houses in their approach to addressing the street. Older houses have living rooms in the front and garages in the rear. New houses have garages in the front and family rooms in the rear. Thus, the major living space has been moved from front to rear, taking activity away from the street."

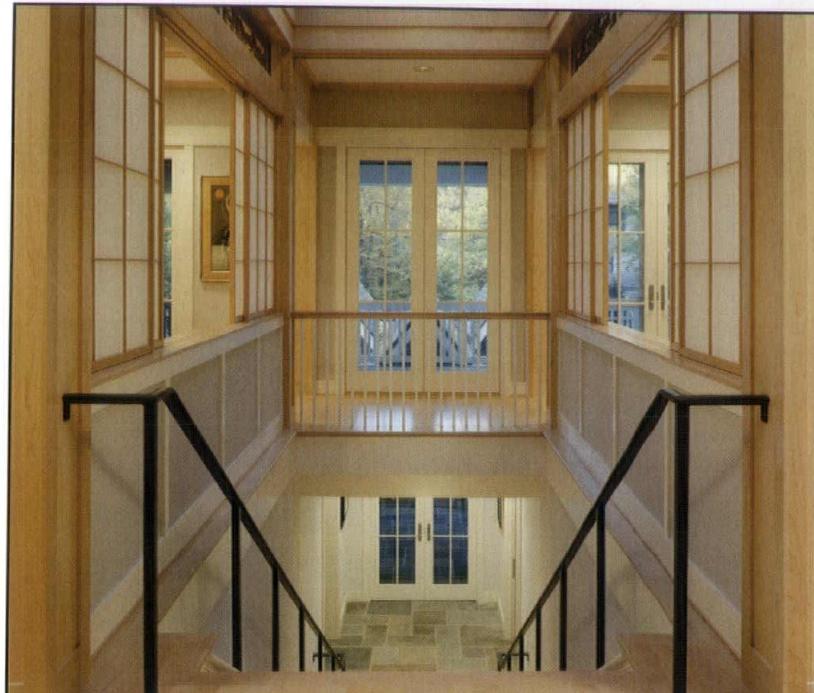
When it comes to appropriate-sized additions, Muse commented, "If the addition results in new spaces being used, but existing spaces not being used, the project is a failure. Viewing the project as an addition/renovation forces the owner and architect to come up with a design that allows for all spaces to be used. This also results in smaller additions."

The Right Scale for a Historic Setting

In a more urban setting, the Shaw neighborhood in Northwest Washington, **Suzane Reatig, FAIA**, faced another kind of scale and proportion challenge. Reatig, a principal of **Suzane Reatig Architecture**, was asked to design infill development of flats and duplexes in scale with the surrounding two-story row houses. "It's a charming street on a human scale," said the architect. "This is a historic neighborhood, so the design had to pass the city's historic review process. I didn't want to put in anything intrusive."

Her completed project comprises ground-floor flats and two-story duplexes cleverly disguised as four row houses. The two-story brick facade and recessed third-story sloped glass wall stand in total comfort next to the neighboring buildings. "The top-floor glazing is stepped back, so you don't feel the mass from the street," explained Reatig. "In the back, where no one cares, you do see the full three stories." The upper units have private rooftop terraces with breathtaking views of downtown Washington, and the lower-level units offer private enclosed patios.

Five two-story row houses, each about 14 feet wide, previously occupied the site. Today's zoning codes do not permit such narrow houses, so Reatig replaced them with four 18-foot wide houses. "These are modern interior

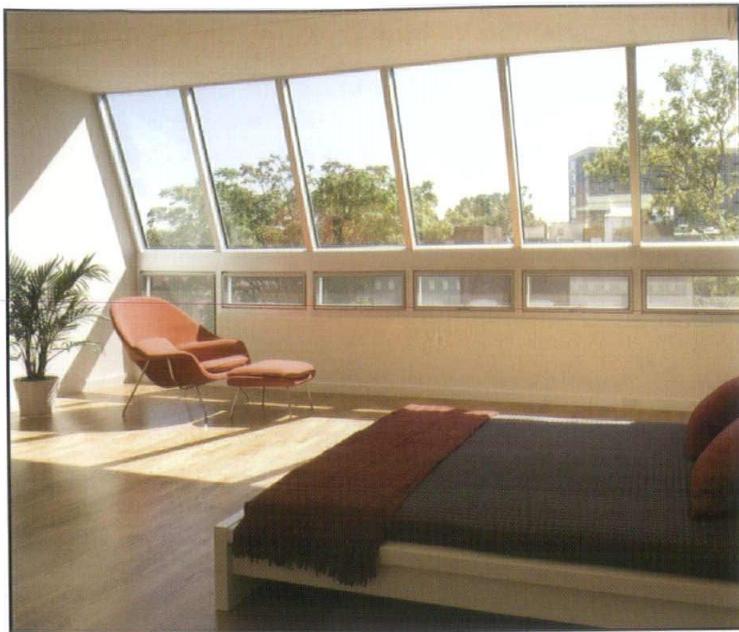


Maxwell MacKenzie Architectural Photographer



Robert Lautman

New row houses in historic
Shaw neighborhood.



Robert Lautman



Robert Lautman

Interior and rear of new infill in Shaw.

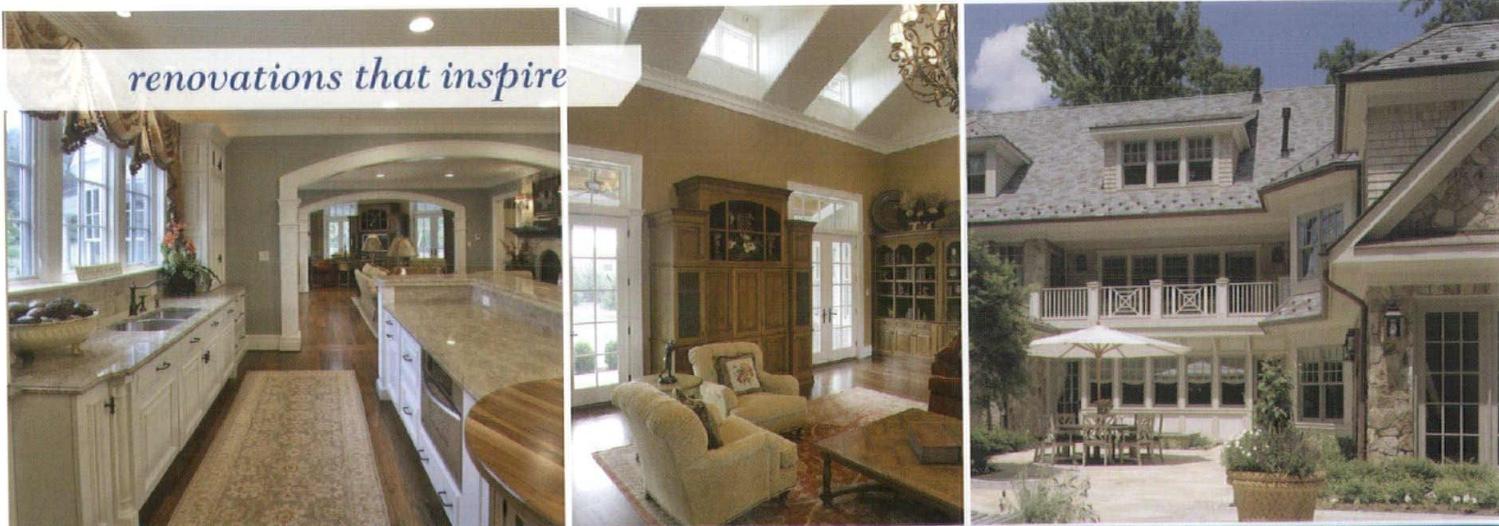
spaces with the tall ceilings, light, and space everyone wants now," she said. "Everyone is happy—the city, the residents, the neighbors."

Keeping It Simple

When Suzanne Parmelee Hren, AIA, LEED AP, Principal in **Parmelee Architecture**, was designing a second-floor addition to a 1930s bungalow in Hyattsville, Maryland, she "really wanted something that would blend in and not be ostentatious. Often builders put on second-floor additions that stick out like a sore thumb. Some are

too high and the whole house ends up looking top heavy. Not only are these additions ugly, they do not function well keeping the interiors cool in the summer and warm in the winter."

Her solution was a new second floor with a steeper gabled roof while retaining the first-floor gable overhang. The overhang provides passive solar shading for the south-facing windows in the summer while letting in light in the winter. The steeper gabled roof allowed generous space for the second-floor bedrooms, two full bathrooms and an open study area with closets. ■



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The Best Defense

Is A Good Architect

by Stephen Vanze, AIA, LEED AP

The last ten years have seen a convergence of three trends in housing:

- The price of housing has increased logarithmically
- Buyers want bigger and bigger houses
- People want to move back to the city, or at least closer to it

These trends are intense in urban centers, but even more so in Washington and its close-in suburbs. While we are seeing a slowdown in the increased price of housing, the desire for bigger homes, closer to the city is stronger than ever.

The result has been an enormous number of huge additions that dwarf the original home or older homes being torn down to make way for behemoths. These new larger houses do not just have more square footage, they are of a bigger scale. The ceilings are taller; the rooms, windows, and doors are bigger. They are much, *much* taller. It is as though the older houses have been put on steroids. When one of these new, larger houses is inserted

into a neighborhood of older homes, it seems odd and out of place. It is an impolite intrusion into an existing context. There are some neighborhoods where one can't be sure who is the odd man out—the new larger homes or the smaller older homes. In some communities, it is the smaller, older homes that look out of place.

Why does this bother us? Aren't we a country that believes in the free market? Hasn't our country remained strong because of this very ability to change and redefine itself? We are a forever young culture because we embrace innovation, change, and tolerance. So why does it bother us that our neighborhoods are changing to match what seems to be new needs and values?

The answer lies in the old joke, "How many Virginians does it take to change a light bulb? Two—one to screw in the new light bulb and one to talk about how great the old one was." We love the new thing, but we are nostalgic for the old thing. The old thing brings back memories of a more idealistic past, when our fathers fought Hitler or our forefathers founded a new utopian country. When

we drive through a neighborhood of one-and-a-half-story bungalows, we are sucked back in time to a make-believe world of our youth. We like the patina of age, the dirt, the wear.

Consider what existed before that neighborhood of bungalows or small, center-hall Colonials was built. It might have been a farmhouse surrounded by open farmland. It might have been woods. Consider how the residents of that time felt when the farmland was subdivided, or the woods were felled to make room for houses. Consider how they felt when new enormous Colonial Revival houses were built, dwarfing the smaller existing houses. And now those enormous Colonials are being dwarfed by even bigger houses.

We must accept change, but it must be balanced and it must protect the part of the past worth protecting. How do we balance this? Baseball has recently had a flood of players taking steroids and growth hormones. It is the responsibility of the Baseball Commissioner to make sure that these players do not outsize and overpower the other players in the league. Do we need a neighborhood commissioner?

In fact we have several neighborhood commissioners. One is zoning. Zoning regulates how close a building can come to its front, side, and rear property lines. It determines how tall a house can be, how many accessory structures, where they are, and how big they can be. Increasingly new zoning regulations in residential districts have begun to control mass and density, using a tool called Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The FAR controls the amount of square footage that can be built on the lot. A typical FAR restriction of .5 would limit the square footage of a house to one half the square footage of the lot. Zoning does not, however, control aesthetics and scale. Zoning cannot provide rules that leave no room for interpretation about what fits the scale of the neighborhood, what is ugly, or what is beautiful.

Because of this limited power of zoning, some neighborhoods have enlisted another commissioner, the historic review board. Many neighborhoods in the Washington area are designated as historic districts where any addition to a house, demolition of a house, or construction of a new house requires the approval of some kind of historic review board. These boards protect the existing homes when they are worthy of protection. They ensure that new houses and additions are compatible with existing structures and are in scale and character with the rest of the neighborhood.

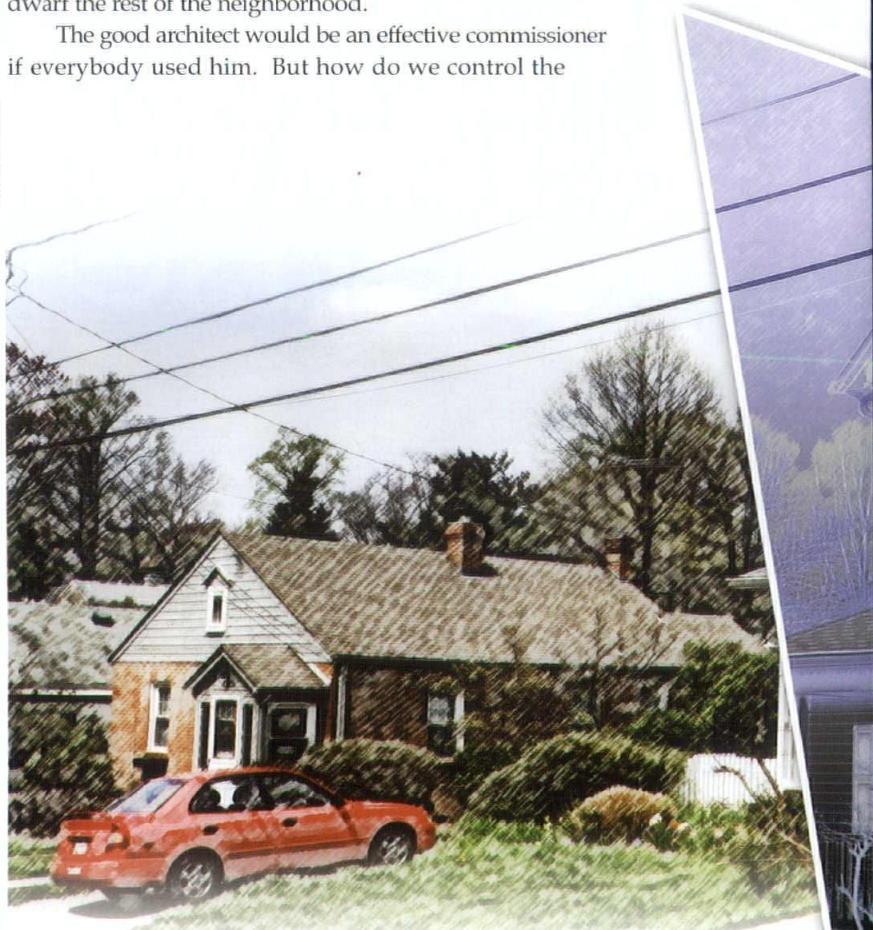
Historic review boards only work in neighborhoods that have been designated historic districts. How do you protect the aesthetics and scale of undesignated neighborhoods? Some communities have tried architectural guidelines. These guidelines can govern permitted

material, paint colors, roof slopes, proportion of window openings, etc. However, they run the risk of producing monotony. If they are too strict, every house will inevitably look the same, and variety is often the aspect of older neighborhoods that we most value. If they are too loose, they protect nothing.

This brings us to the commissioner that has great potential value, but is often overlooked, the good architect. The architect's tools are his eyes and his dispassionate judgment. The good architect will evaluate the neighborhood context and endeavor to design an addition or new home to fit that context. The architect will not only consider how all the needs of the homeowner will be met, but how the house will fit in aesthetically and politely with its surroundings. The house is a piece of the whole neighborhood, just as each room is a piece of the whole house. The good architect will convince a homeowner that his new family room should not dwarf the rest of the house, or that his new house should not dwarf the rest of the neighborhood.

The good architect would be an effective commissioner if everybody used him. But how do we control the

David Rikard

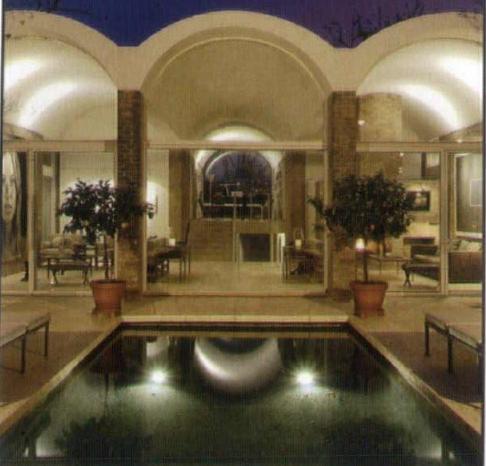


developer whose sole goal is to build the largest house possible under the zoning regulations? Zoning can only control so much. Historic review boards are only effective in districts that have been designated historic. And the good architect is only there if hired. Are we left with the marketplace to tell the developer that the steroid-fed houses are not what the market wants? Unfortunately, they might be what a part of the market does want. Do we layer on another set of regulations—architectural guidelines—and run the risk of cookie-cutter Levittowns?

There may not be the perfect answer. There may not be an answer. We may have to wait for the marketplace to come to the conclusion that bigger is not always better. ☺




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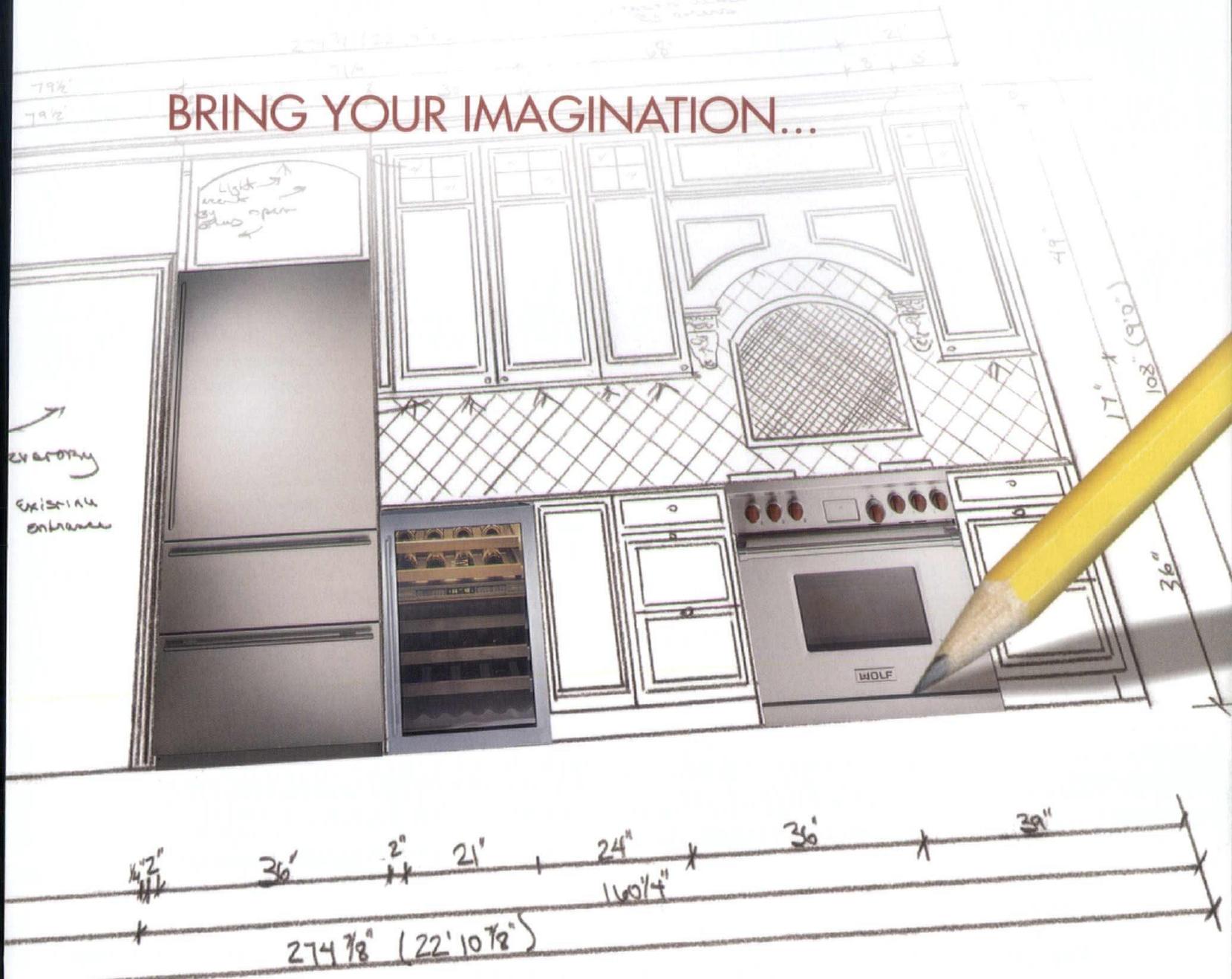
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A Well-Grounded Move

by Ronald O'Rourke

Many young adults set up their first home in a ground-floor apartment in the city, with the ultimate goal of one day moving into a nice detached house in the suburbs. Amy and Mark Butler have turned this typical residential progression on its head: They recently moved themselves and their three children, by choice, from a charming, shingled bungalow in an established neighborhood to a three-bedroom, ground-floor condominium unit in downtown Silver Spring. The Butlers' beautiful new residence was designed for them by the Alexandria-based firm of **Geier Brown Renfrow Architects** (GBR).

The 1,900-square-foot Butler condo is one of 56 units in Eastern Village, a condominium cohousing development (see sidebar) created through the conversion of a 1950s-era office building in downtown Silver Spring. The condo is a case study in how good architecture can transform a seemingly unpromising space into a functional, beautiful family residence that incorporates green-design features and doesn't break the bank. The project was completed for about \$120 per square foot – roughly one-half to one-third of what many homeowners are paying in the DC area for residential construction or renovation work.

Reasons to Move

For Amy and Mark Butler, the decision to move themselves and their three children – sons Hayden, 14, and Sam, 9, and daughter Hannah, 10 – from a suburban house to an urban condo was motivated by several considerations, including a concern for the quality of their family life.

"Our bungalow was beautiful," said Amy. "It had been fully renovated shortly before we bought it, it was on a lot and a half, [and] it had great family amenities, like a wooden play set in the backyard and fenced areas for the kids and the dog. However, both of us work full time downtown, and we began to notice how quickly our kids were growing up."

The New Location

In addition to wanting a low-maintenance family residence, Amy said, "we were looking for a living situation that would offer us 'built-in' community – opportunities to interact with others outside the circles of our work." Amy and Mark learned about the Eastern Village cohousing development, and thought it could be a good place for them. "We were very attracted to the principles of cohousing and felt Eastern Village might provide the kind of community we were seeking." Eastern Village emphasizes sustainable development – the development's converted building has received LEED Silver certification – and this also appealed to the Butlers.

"We became interested in green design because we started reading about cohousing," Amy said. "As we explored Eastern Village we learned about exciting options in green design. We soon learned that green design, in addition to helping us be environmentally responsible, also offered some very unique, unusual and affordable design options, especially for the challenging space we found."

A Challenging Space

The problem was finding a unit at Eastern Village that would meet their needs. "We were looking for a condo large enough for all five of us within the context of an intentional community," she said. "We could have tried to purchase a three-bedroom unit already in existence, but the designs of the available units would not accomplish the goal of creating open family living space."

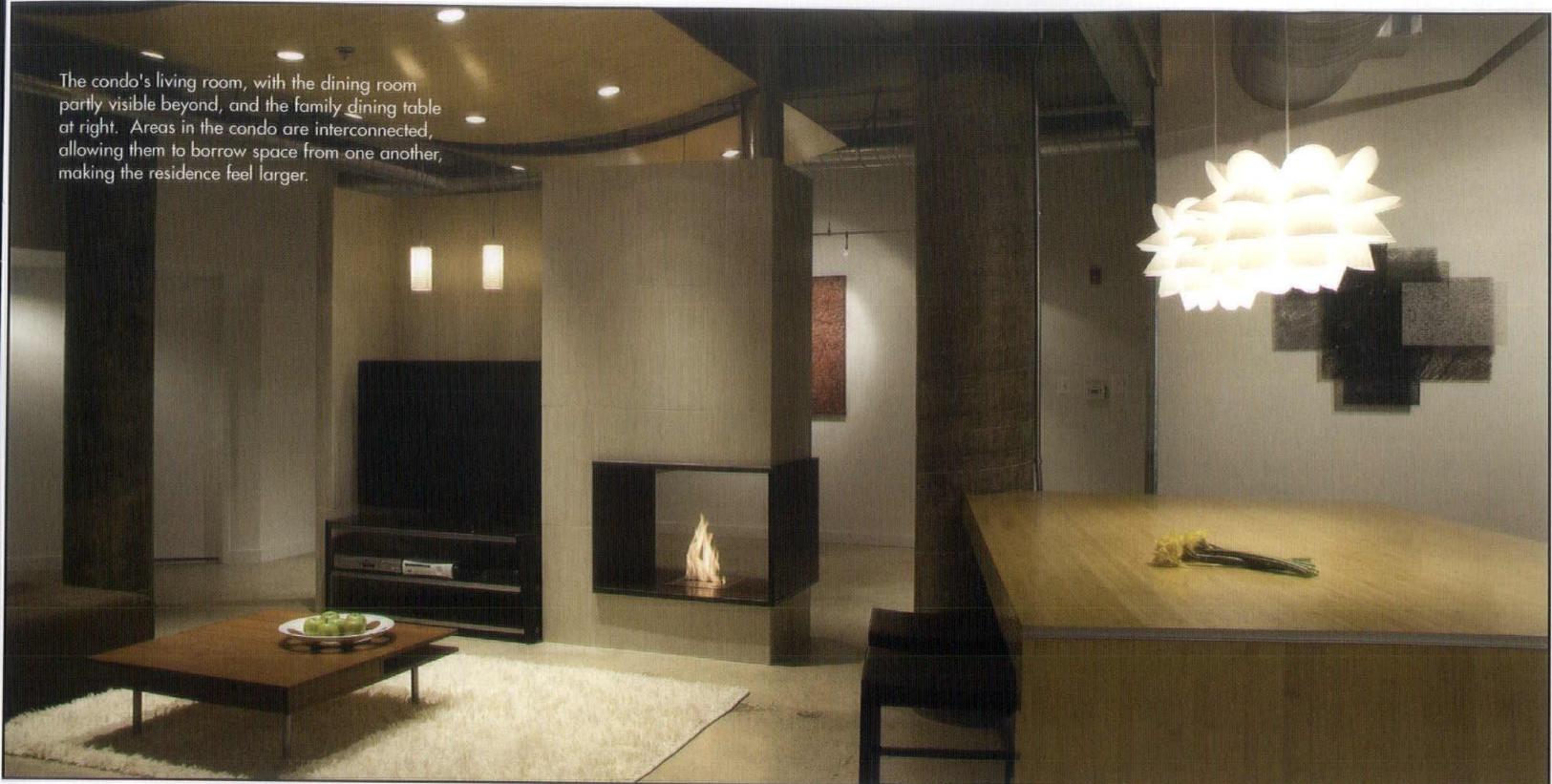
The Butlers consequently began to focus on a different possibility – an unfinished, 1,900-square-foot area on the ground floor of the building. The space was partially below grade, with little natural light or ventilation, several load bearing columns, and large overhead conduits.

To assess the space's potential for meeting their needs, the Butlers turned to architect **Phillip Renfrow, AIA**, a principal at GBR. "[Renfrow] is a personal friend," Amy said, "so when we first looked at the possibility of designing and building out our space, we asked him to come take a look and give us his opinion."

Renfrow saw the potential design advantages of the space. "At first sight, this was the perfect project for any architect – an empty warehouse with exposed structure, the essential urban loft. The only thing missing was abundant natural light and industrial sash windows. I looked at the space with them," he said, and "sketched a couple of ideas, just to give them comfort in what could be achieved."

"We were very uncertain about moving forward, primarily because of the lack of natural light in the space," Amy said. "After weighing the pros and cons and talking with GBR, we took the plunge..."

The condo's living room, with the dining room partly visible beyond, and the family dining table at right. Areas in the condo are interconnected, allowing them to borrow space from one another, making the residence feel larger.



Finding an Architect

Having decided to go ahead with the project, the next task was to find an architect for it. "I encouraged them to interview architectural firms and look seriously at how they thought they could work with the architect(s) that would actually work with them," Renfrow said. "I also told them that residential work was not our strong suit, but [that] if they wanted to include us in the selection, we would participate."

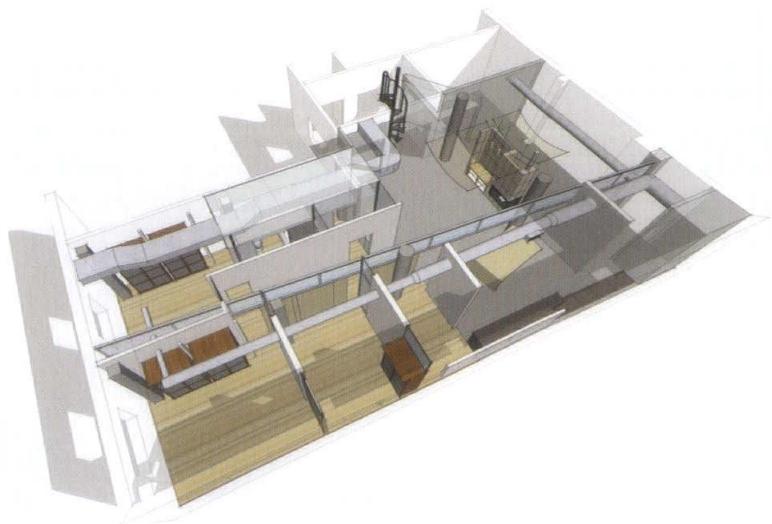
In the end, Amy and Mark came back to GBR. Amy said that Renfrow "explained that if we decided to work with GBR, we would work with a newer associate in the firm, Camilo Bearman [AIA]. GBR primarily works on large institutional projects, and we knew a small residential space was really not their normal interest. However, Camilo had a background in residential design and a strong interest in modern, green design."

"For us," Amy said, "the deciding moment was in our first conversation with Camilo. His very first question to us was to ask us to talk to him about what we hoped our family life would be like in the new space. We felt that Camilo understood what was at the core of this decision to design a new home. This understanding of our basic motivation made Camilo very effective in his design work."

"My most brilliant contribution to the whole project," Renfrow said, "was that I introduced them to Camilo early." "GBR was also attractive to us," Amy added, "because we knew we would be using unusual, more industrial materials in our project, and it seemed that GBR's work designing [institutional structures] would make them effective in the use and acquisition of less-conventional materials. We knew they were the right fit for us."

Project Goals

Having selected GBR for the project, Amy and Mark told the firm what they wanted to achieve in the new design. All five members



of the family came to the first meeting. "We wanted to create a space with three small bedrooms and two bathrooms, in which the living space would be open and multi-functional, where we could be engaged in different activities but still be together," Amy said. "Additionally, we needed a design that would make the most of the very limited light in the space and a design that was very budget-conscious, using materials and space as creatively and efficiently as possible."

Design Strategy

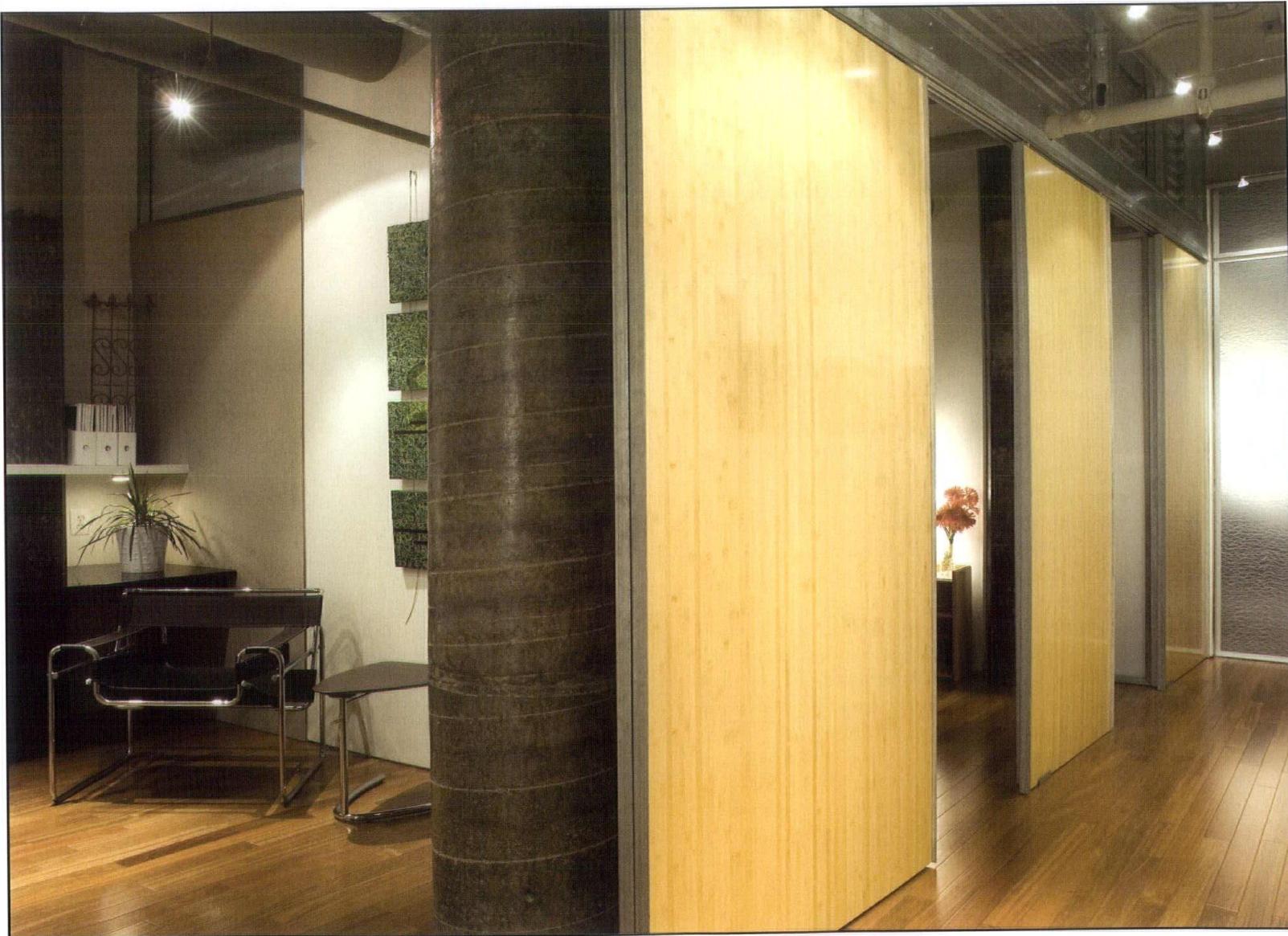
"A good portion of the unit is below grade and abutting the property line or public walkways," Bearman said. As a consequence, he and Renfrow said, "capturing more light was the most serious challenge. Little exterior wall was available, and not in prime locations."

To meet this challenge, they said, "Three new modest windows, in strategic positions, were inserted into the exterior wall, almost doubling the amount of light penetrating the space. A second layer of transparency was developed between defined spaces – the bedrooms, study, kitchen, and utility room – by [using] a continuous transom of ribbed acrylic glazing to allow light [to move] from the

exterior [of the unit] deep into the interior space. At other locations, a translucent glazing was used to borrow artificial light from one space to another further increasing the amount of available light."

"A third method of increasing the light," they said, "was to introduce reflective surfaces. This was accomplished with the use of exposed metal stud framing in the transom; the ribs of the acrylic glazing (which reflect light in linear forms); sliding corrugated metal panels (which also conceal utility spaces), highly reflective metal tiles, and light colors."

In addition to helping pass light through the unit, Bearman said, the use of translucent glazing between certain spaces helps to make the unit seem larger by "minimiz[ing] the sense of being enclosed, so that one always understands that there is another space beyond, and somehow you're experiencing that area as well." Another design challenge, Bearman said, "was making sense of the existing exposed building systems and the exposed structure, such as the sprinkler system and duct work, [and the] concrete and steel, which were all meant for an open commercial space but couldn't be relocated because of budgetary concerns. Some of the exposed systems actually serve spaces above."



The hallway leading to the condo's three bedrooms and two full baths. Sliding doors save space, and translucent materials permit light to be transmitted from perimeter windows into the residence's interior.

"Adding a lowered ceiling to conceal these lines," Bearman explained, "would have blocked off or obscured the few windows there were. So we decided upon an order of things: framed drywall partitions would be used to seemingly corral these items, which allowed for easy detailing where ducts and pipes penetrate the partition. Furthermore, it helped reveal the logic of how these systems operate in the space, like a large-scale conduit raceway might. Then, other spatial divisions would be accomplished by glazing or sliding panels."

GBR's design also responded to the Butlers' social goals. "A sense of community [in the design] was accomplished through two major concepts," they said. "First, an oversized, built-in kitchen table becomes the family magnet, serving as [a gathering place for] family dining, homework, games, and impromptu gathering." Second, they said, conventional doors were minimized, and entire walls were designed to slide to conceal – measures that, in addition to helping light to penetrate to the core of the unit, also connect the public area in the center of the unit to rooms around the perimeter, allowing all these areas to visually borrow space from one another and enhance the family's sense of community.

"The design far surpassed anything we even imagined," Amy said. "It's just so amazing, both in its beauty and in its functionality."

Sustainability Features

In addition to using the building's ground-source heating and cooling system, the unit's sustainability features include extensive use of bamboo products (Plyboo) in the custom dining table, sliding walls and vanities; grinding, polishing, and sealing the original concrete floor in the unit's public areas (rather than introducing another flooring material in those areas); and reusing where feasible several utility-like fluorescent light fixtures that came with the space when it was bought. The unit also incorporates exposed steel framing and polycarbonate glazing, both of which are completely recyclable.

"Everywhere you turn today," Renfrow said, "you're staring at green this and green that. There are even news websites that are focused on green living. It's about as commonplace as your dishwasher. This [project] shows that being sustainable can be about just simply doing with less [by doing things such as] not building as much space – who would expect a family of five to live in 1,900 square feet? – reusing existing structures, and substantially reducing the use of materials."

The Construction Phase

"Working together with GBR and our contractor, Construction and Development, Inc., defied every horror story we'd heard," Amy said. "Both companies were extremely professional and responsive to our needs and concerns. Because this was a new experience for us, they very patiently walked us through the process. We really appreciated their transparent communication, especially when it came to costs. We always felt they were advocating for us, with vendors, [and] the county, treating the project like it was their own personal project. We'd heard so many terrible stories of bad experiences with building and design projects. What surprised us most was how great the experience was."

The Results

The Butlers are enjoying their new home in the way that they had hoped. "It seems like what we suspected about space contributing to the quality of our family life was correct," Amy said. "We thoroughly enjoy the open living space, especially the large, built-in bamboo table in the kitchen."

Advice for Others

"If there's any example to follow here," Amy said, "it would be to think outside the box about how your living space might reflect the kind of life you want to live. We never knew we had that option, and the experience has been very empowering for us."

"We never in all our lives imagined we'd ever hire an architect for anything," Amy said. "Who hires an architect? Surely not people like us, with limited budgets and small projects! We can honestly say, though, that there is no way we could ever have turned this space into what we hoped and imagined it might be without the creative guidance of our architects. Because of the professional expertise they brought to the project, we're very sure we saved thousands of dollars by avoiding ignorant mistakes. And, with the leadership of our architects, the functionality and beauty of the space goes far beyond what we ever imagined it might."

"Phil Renfrow's advice about the relationship between an architect and client was very valuable to us," she added. "Careful consideration of those dynamics was key in our experience and we'd pass that advice along to anyone considering a project. We now know the critical input of a professional architect. If we ever do another design/build in our lifetime, the first task we'll complete is hiring an architect!"

What is Cohousing?

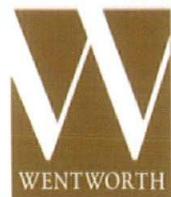
By Ronald O'Rourke

The Cohousing Association of the Untied States defines cohousing as "a type of collaborative housing in which residents actively participate in the design and operation of their own neighborhoods. Cohousing residents are consciously committed to living as a community. The physical design encourages both social contact and individual space. Private homes contain all the features of conventional homes, but residents also have access to extensive common facilities such as open space, courtyards, a playground and a common house."

The association states that cohousing communities "combine the advantages of private homes with the benefits of more sustainable living, including shared common facilities and ongoing connections with neighbors. These intentional neighborhoods, created and managed by residents, offer an innovative solution to today's environmental and social challenges."

For more information on cohousing, log onto the association's Web site at www.cohousing.org. Additional information on cohousing can be found at the Web site of the Canadian Cohousing Network at www.cohousing.ca. For more on the Eastern Village cohousing development, log onto www.easternvillage.org.

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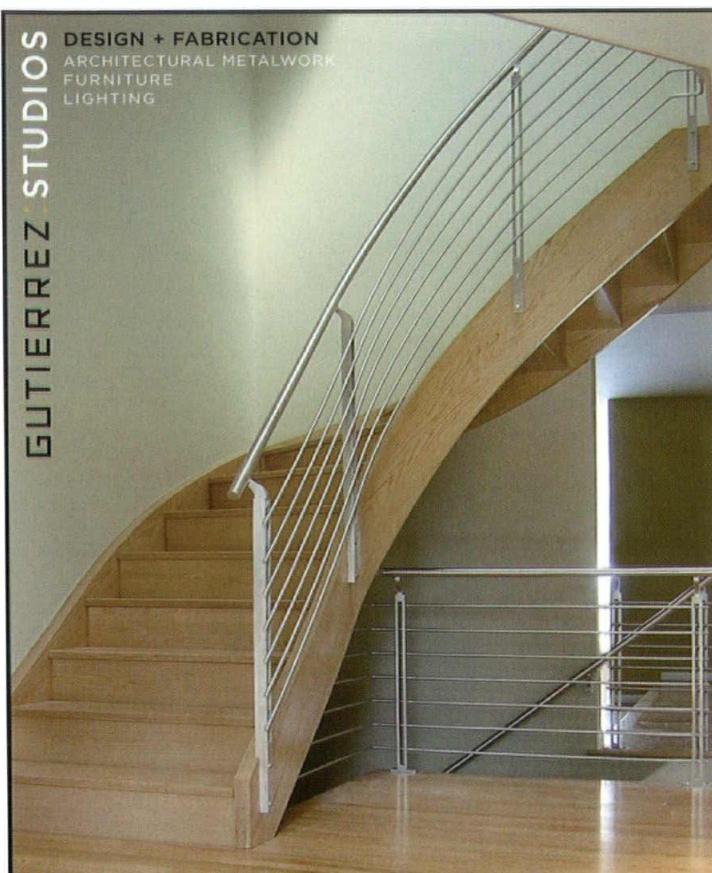
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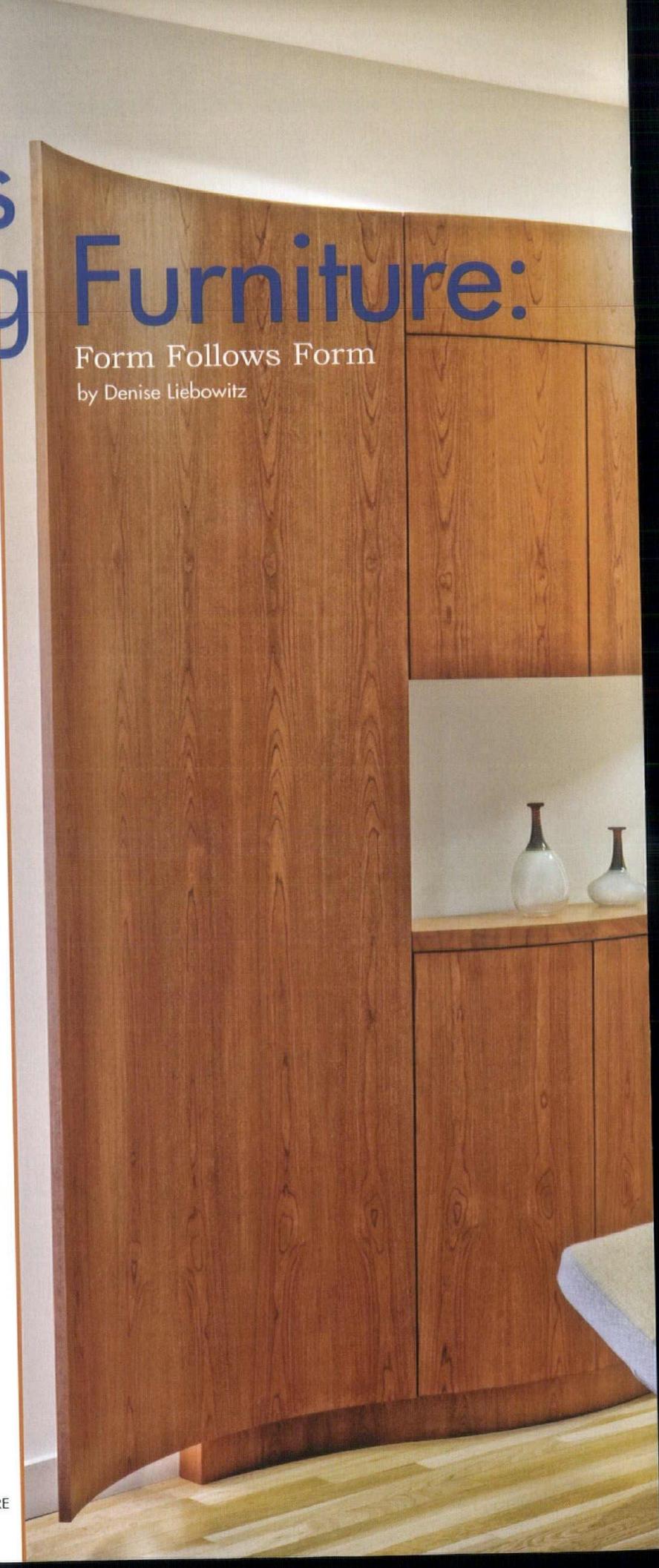
by Denise Liebowitz

From Robert Adam and Charles Rennie Mackintosh to Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies van der Rohe, great architects have long turned their design talents to furniture. For many, the creation of furniture is implicit in their architecture; the two disciplines share a symbiotic, entwined relationship. Today, Washington architects are continuing this tradition, seeking to elevate interior furnishings as an integral part of their architectural design. For some architects, furniture design is a small adjunct to their practice; they only occasionally resort to designing a highly customized piece for a specific project when the commercial marketplace cannot provide it. For other architects, furniture design is their first love, the core of their business, and readily available to anyone who wants it.

"THE FURNITURE WAS PUSHING US AROUND... WE DECIDED TO PUSH BACK"

According to **John Dennis Murphey, AIA**, of **Meditch Murphey Architects**, "Architect-designed furniture helps the architecture." In Murphey's sleek, understated interiors highly crafted millwork often extends into built-in cabinetry and furniture. "Traditional furniture usually takes up too much space, and just feels like more clutter," said the architect. In a recent renovation of a large suburban home in McLean, Virginia, Murphey's goal was to use "as light a touch as possible. The house has a Scandinavian feel, and we wanted the interior to feel light-filled and lightweight." For the living room, Murphey designed a cherry "wavy armoire that morphs into the wall." He points out that the custom piece serves several functions: it is lighting, a display area, and storage space. "This is replacing traditional furniture with architecture," explained Murphey.

Highly crafted millwork is in evidence throughout the interior. The staircase is a piece of furniture, interior cherry shutters serve as important design elements, bathroom built-ins replace standard storage units. The custom round carpets designed by the architect pick up on colors and forms of the overall design. For the bar chairs, Murphey first built plywood models to test out his design.





Luxury millwork in a McLean home takes the place of traditional furniture.

Photographs on pages 46-47
by Maxwell MacKenzie
Architectural Photographer

The bedrooms of the McLean house are not large. In one, the architect tried several possible furniture layouts with the usual bed, dressing, night table, etc., and found them all too cramped. "The furniture was pushing us around; we decided to push back and design our own." In Murphey's elegant solution, the bed conceals underneath storage drawers, the bed headboard ducks down to avoid blocking the window, and the reading light is built into the headboard so a night stand is not needed. "It's nice not to design around someone else's furniture."

Murphey says that having your architect design custom furniture is not more expensive than the store-bought approach. "The architect has to first think it through and that takes a little time and costs a little money. But after that, it really is pretty simple woodworking, basically with glue and nails."

Murphey and Lael Taylor, another architect in the firm who worked on the McLean house, demonstrated just how far architects will go to inject their aesthetic sensibilities into a project. As a surprise gift, they presented to their clients, both avid puzzlers, a wooden jig saw puzzle based on the design of one their custom carpets.

"THEY WANTED BEAUTIFULLY MADE FURNITURE, MODERN BUT NOT ULTRA-MODERN"



Much like John Murphey, **Andreas Charalambous, AIA**, Principal of **Forma Design**, began by designing furniture for his clients when they couldn't find what they needed in the commercial market.

"They wanted beautifully made furniture, modern but not ultra-modern, and that's not always easy to find," explained the architect. When Charalambous's interiors and custom furniture began to be featured in shelter magazines and design publications, the architect began receiving calls from readers asking how they could get the furniture. "Then, when our work was featured on HGTV, we received a barrage of phone calls from the public about our furniture," he recalled.

Prompted by all this interest, Charalambous began working with local and Canadian furniture manufacturers to produce the designs in his distinctive Cha Cha line. While he continues to custom design pieces for his clients, he also offers ready-made standardized pieces that can be shipped flat to customers all over the country. The Forma Design Web site prominently features the Cha Cha furniture, and Charalambous is even exploring possible furniture manufacturing partners in Asia as a further way to keep costs down. "Forma Design is not a typical architecture firm...we have an integrated approach to design graphics and Web design, interiors and product design in addition to architecture. Furniture is a very natural part of this." Check Forma Design offerings at www.formaonline.com.

"I LOVE BEING AN ARCHITECT AND I LOVE FURNITURE DESIGN"



Tom Shiner, AIA, IDSA, of Thomas S. Shiner

Architect, has been building furniture since he was a teenager, studied furniture design as a graduate student, and now teaches it. Furniture is a big part of his practice; he almost always incorporates his

own furniture designs into his residential projects, and he has also built up a small commercial furniture business as an adjunct to his architecture practice. Operating since 1997, Shiner's Museum & Library Furniture (M&LF) business started when he designed a stool for a museum educator in Germany. M&LF provides simple, functional,



and sustainable furniture to institutional clients throughout the US as well as internationally. His designs for public seating will soon be going into the new visitor center at Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia. You can see some of these designs at www.themuseumstool.com.

"Superb craftsmanship, gorgeous materiality, unique designs, high functionality, and control of schedule," are some of the benefits for clients when their architect designs the furniture as well, according to Shiner. "One of the primary reasons I work with custom furniture is to control cost. Custom is expensive, but it's always something special, and it usually provides something satisfying for my clients." Shiner works with outstanding individual craftsmen and a factory. He has had a continuing collaboration with one woodworker for more than 30 years. "Finding craftsmen always happens as a result of mutual attraction; we need one another and enjoy working at a high level. I am always looking for fabrication talent, but the fabricator must respect the power and added value of design."

Shiner also produces the furniture designs of his former professor at Virginia Tech. In collaboration with the supplier, he has completed a production sample for Professor Olivio Ferrari's Oval Chair, a graceful laminated wood rocker. "I love being an architect and I love furniture design. For me, the two disciplines are inseparable," said Shiner.

"WE WERE ASKED TO DESIGN LINES THAT ARE ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE'

Envision Design, PLLC, is known for its sustainable designs that have minimal impact on the environment. Principal and co-founder, **Kendall Wilson, AIA, IIDA, LEED AP**, said, "Because of our strong environmental focus, we were asked to design lines of carpet and textiles that are environmentally responsible." Envision has designed broadloom carpeting for Lees Carpets, modular carpet tile for Mohawk Commercial, and commercial textiles for HBF Textiles. Wilson has developed several of these designs in collaboration with his business partner, Diana Horvat.

The Mohawk Synergy Collection features three related patterns and its beauty is more than skin deep. The line's fibers and backing contain a high percentage of recycled materials. The manufacturing facility in Virginia is located within a 500-mile radius of major population and consumer centers, and in the design process Envision used simulation technology rather than producing energy-consuming physical samples. Wilson points out that the carpet backing contains no PVC (vinyl) and the entire carpet tile can be recycled into new carpet backing. This is a significant breakthrough, since PVC is manufactured from highly toxic components and called "poison plastic" by Greenpeace.

Envision's Trace Collection for HBF Textiles includes six patterns of fabrics for use on upholstered walls and panels that Wilson said he wanted to look interesting both

from close up and from a distance. The collection is produced in manufacturing facilities that employ renewable energy, reduce their solid waste generation through reuse and recycling programs, employ non-toxic dyes, and minimize water consumption. In 2006 the collection won the coveted Best of NeoCon Silver Award, a competition sponsored in part by the International Interior Designers Association and honoring innovative products introduced to US markets.

"IT'S LIKE A FIRST-YEAR DESIGN STUDIO IN ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL"

The next generation of American architects is already honing its skills in furniture design. The National Building Museum's Design Apprenticeship Program (DAP), gives teenagers with an interest in architecture and design an opportunity for some hands-on experience. A recent series of DAP workshops was organized around the Building Museum's exhibition, *Marcel Breuer: Design and Architecture*. Students were challenged to design and construct furniture for a local community center, the Dinner Program for Homeless Women. The downtown center had been relocated and needed new furniture. DAP teens investigated the importance of furniture design through exhibition tours, model-making, and conversations with local furniture design studios. Then, working in teams, they designed and built their own furniture.

Volunteer professionals like **Kelly Malloy, Assoc. AIA**, at **WDG Architecture, PLLC**, helped students fine-tune their design skills, understand the concepts of durability and sustainability, and explore modern furniture design. "It's like a first-year design studio in architecture school," said Malloy of the Building Museum program. "The kids have a budget, they are supervised in the museum's wood shop, and, of course, they have to finish their project on schedule. This past session, I had two teenage girls who really got into using power tools in the shop." Malloy reports that the new furniture is now being delivered to the homeless center.

The Design Apprenticeship Program takes place on Saturdays during the fall and spring of the academic year. Up to twenty-five students participate in each DAP series of six design-intensive sessions. The program is open to students between ages 14 to 18 and is free. For more information call 202.272.2448 ext. 3301, or e-mail DAP@nbm.org.





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MARK TWAIN BENCH design: Tom Shiner, AIA, IDSA

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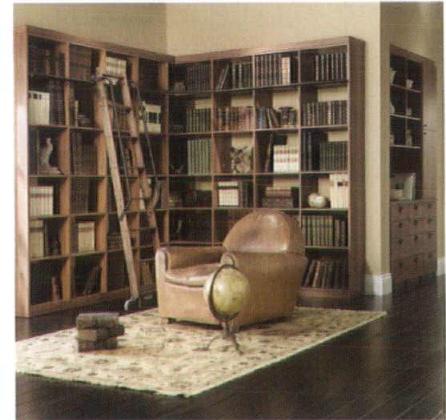
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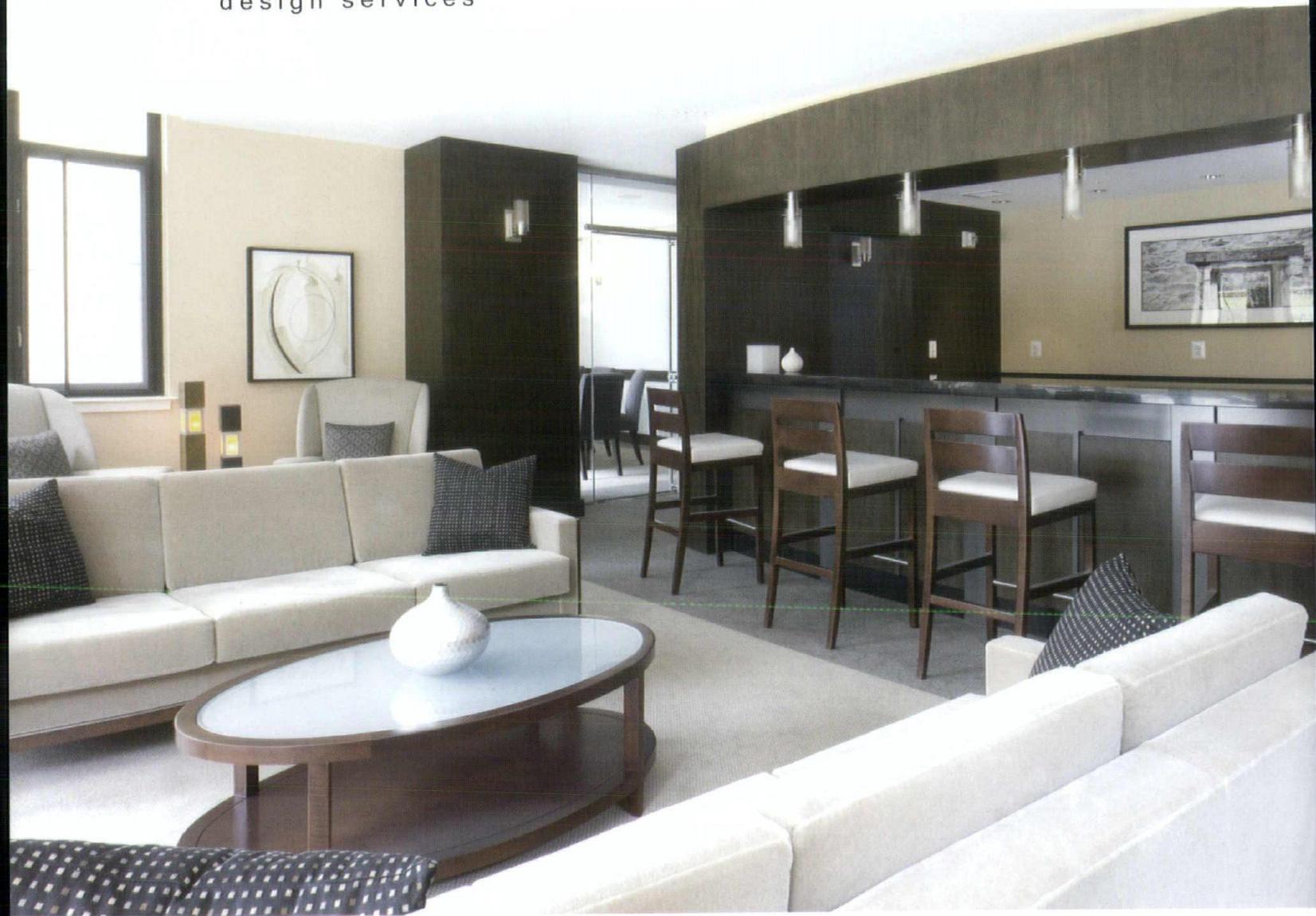
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